

MEDIA RELEASE

**Reporting cyber fraud anonymously to Crime Stoppers
is surprisingly easy – and needs to happen more often**

VANCOUVER, B.C. (March 13, 2019): Only five per cent of the tips Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers receives anonymously each year relate to fraudulent crime – and that should change, because it’s actually costing Canadians millions of dollars, it lets criminals “get away with it” and it impacts victims emotionally and psychologically.

With March being *Anti-Fraud Month* in Canada, a Better Business Bureau [report](#) recently identified “catphishing” as the top scam in Canada – a crime that has cost victims more than \$22 million dollars in 2018. Catphishers create a phoney online profile and then use dating sites or other links to gain the trust of victims and defraud them.

The familiar and frequent fake phone calls we get supposedly from the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) have cost victims \$6 million last year. Fraudulent online purchases and identity theft also rank highly in the report, costing \$3.5 million.

“Be skeptical of anyone with free trials or who makes offers that seem irresistible - and resist anyone who wants you to make decisions in a hurry,” says Linda Annis, Executive Director of Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers. “And if you know someone who’s become a victim, call Crime Stoppers anonymously. Many people think of us as helping only with major or violent crimes, but fraud is also a serious criminal offence. Any information we receive anonymously on any kind of crime is immediately passed to the relevant authorities for investigation. Your name and contact information will not be taken and you’ll never be questioned or required to testify in court.”

People can leave anonymous tips with Crime Stoppers in a variety of ways including Crime Stoppers’ new downloadable “P3” crime reporting app for smartphones, by calling Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477, online at solvecrime.ca, or by following the link on the Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers [Facebook page](#).

Cases of fraudulent crime may also be directed to local police or the [Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre](#). Remember to hang on to any documents, receipts, copies of emails and text messages that may help the investigation.

Additional helpful anti-fraud tips are available from [Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers](#) and the [RCMP](#). Some highlights:

- Watch family members with a sudden inability to pay their bills and who start asking for loans.
- Check their banking records for transactions with unfamiliar people or companies, and watch for secretive behaviour about phone calls.
- Avoid making financial transactions on public Wi-Fi; use a password protected network.
- Website URL address security: look for the https at the start of the URL and make sure the green bar and padlock are present in the browser bar.
- Ensure you know who you are buying from - and be cautious when purchasing tickets. Buy only from a trusted source.
- Use a secure payment site such as PayPal unless you know who you're paying money to.
- Register your credit card with Verified by Visa, Mastercard Secure or American Express SafeKey for added security.
- Use mobile banking to check your statements regularly and watch for mobile alerts for your bank account.
- Get familiar with your consumer rights from [Consumer Protection BC](#).

About Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers

Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers is a non-profit society and registered charity that offers rewards for anonymous tip information about criminal activity and provides it to investigators in the communities of Metro Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers is not the police and operates solely on funds donated, or generated through fundraising events like Crime Stoppers' annual "Jail and Bail" events. Tax-deductible donations are gratefully received anytime by accessing the "donate" link at solvecrime.ca.

Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers accepts tips in 115 different languages and will pay a reward of up to \$2,000 for information leading to the arrest of a criminal, recovery of stolen property, seizure of illegal drugs or guns or denial of a fraudulent insurance claim. Tipsters stay anonymous by using code numbers to check back later and collect their rewards.

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For media inquiries or interviews please contact:

Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers

Trevor Pancoust

tpancoust@pacegroup.com

604-646-3567