



For Immediate Release

Captain Deion Glover
Government and Media Relations

October 11, 2023

Trooper Chris Thorson
509-731-8964
Christopher.thorson@wsp.wa.gov
Twitter: @wsp3pio

WSP Alerting Public Of Fake Jewelry Selling Scams On Freeways

Benton/Franklin Counties – The Washington State Patrol (WSP) has received multiple reports of individuals selling fake jewelry and watches on the freeways and ramps in eastern Washington in the past two weeks. To date, WSP has contacted four suspects and asks the public to be wary of possible scams and to always report suspicious activity. Beyond financial losses from possible fraud, this type of roadway activity is very unsafe as these subjects are stopping on freeways and ramps where pedestrians are not allowed. At times, they are also stepping out into traffic to get drivers to pull over.

If you find yourself in this type of situation, do not stop and interact with these individuals. Call 911 as soon as possible and give a location and any description of the subject and vehicle type.

The reports have described individuals in higher end rental vehicles that flag down drivers on the side of the freeways or ramps. If you stop for them, they will tell you they need money for gas to get back home and will pay you back by giving you gold jewelry or watches in exchange for the cash. This is typically an aggressive conversation and a demand for cash to help them.

WSP investigated this same type of scam in King County in March and we are now seeing it here in eastern Washington. Prior to the three contacts below, WSP received numerous 911 calls of disabled motorists flagging down traffic in Prosser, Benton City, Pasco, Richland and Kennewick but Troopers were unable to find the subject. .

Incident #1: This occurred October 4, 2023 on the ramp at Road 100 and I-182 in Pasco. The suspect was called in on 911 as waiving down cars. Our trooper contacted the suspect who presented a foreign driver's license from Romania. This suspect stated they ran out of gas and was trying to sell air pod headphones and jewelry in order to get some cash.

Incident #2: This occurred October 7, 2023 on the off ramp from I-82 to Benton City. WSP received a 911 call that a person was waiving down cars. Our trooper contacted a 15 ½ year old and an adult male who presented a foreign driver's license from Romania. Both of these suspects were trying to sell gold and watches in exchange for gas money.

Incident #3: This occurred October 9, 2023 on the ramp from Road 100 to I-182 in Pasco. WSP received a 911 call that a person was waiving down cars. Our trooper contacted an adult male who presented a foreign driver's license from Romania. This subject would not admit to selling anything. They stated they were just parked and waiting for a friend.

The Washington State Patrol is investigating the three above incidents. If you have been a victim to this scam and would like to report your incident, please call our tip line at 509-249-6742.



###