



ALERT

ALBERTA LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSE TEAMS

ALERT's Internet Child Exploitation (ICE) unit has noticed an increase in the prevalence of sexual extortions taking place, primarily over the social media applications Snapchat and Instagram. The suspects are demanding banking or credit card information, gift cards or other means of online payment from the youth or their parents. The predominate age group targeted are boys aged 12-17.

Sextortion typically starts as a new friend request via social media, usually with the suspect masquerading as young woman. The suspect will create the appearance of a promising online relationship and obtain sexually explicit pictures from the victim.

Once obtained, the youth are blackmailed and threatened that this material will be released to friends, family, or shared on the internet, unless a payment is made. Since the offenders often show the victims' friends list from their social media profiles, the demands are repeated and unrelenting.

ICE offers the following tips if you're being extorted online:

- * Immediately stop all communication;
- * Do not comply with the threat;
- * Speak to a trusted adult and report it to police; and
- * Keep the correspondence.

Victims are encouraged to contact local police and seek out help if they are struggling.

For online resources for both parents and youth, visit: NeedHelpNow.ca