



Town of Eagle Police Department

Community Awareness Bulletin - Dangers of On-Line Dating Apps

From 2013 to 2017, the number of young adults using online dating or mobile apps nearly tripled and has become a very popular method of meeting others. While people using these platforms normally have good intentions, the services also offer the opportunity for predators to create fake profiles and commit crimes against unsuspecting singles.

Dating apps help link predators to victims without providing their true identities. Predators can create fake profiles or withhold information until they meet the victims in person, which is often referred to as "catfishing." Unfortunately, the State of Colorado is one of 5 states with the highest catfishing rate per capita.

In 2018, more than 50 crimes in one large Colorado city alone were linked to dating apps. Of those crimes, 34 percent were classified as rape, which accounts for three percent of Denver's total rape cases in 2018. The other crimes included harassment, theft, robbery, and assault.

Community organizations, businesses, middle schools, high schools and colleges are encouraged to establish community awareness on the dangers of dating applications. Some helpful practices for dating app users to avoid becoming susceptible to predators include:

- Do not use real name in username
- Meet in a public space and somewhere familiar
- Tell a friend or family member where you are meeting and time you will be back from a date
- Schedule a short first date
- Drive personal vehicle, instead of having them pick up at home address
- Research the individual to see what comes up on a web search and if they have other dating profiles or social media accounts
- Do not give too much private information when first meeting the person
- Tell at least one other person about the details of the date (time, location, person's name).
- Remember that personal information provided on dating applications can also be utilized by the predator
- Take screenshots and report any suspicious behavior