Gift cards are gifts, not for making payments. If someone calls with urgent news or a convincing story and then pressures you to pay them by buying a gift card, like an iTunes or Google Play card, and then giving them the codes on the back of the card – stop. It’s a scam.

Gift cards are the number one payment method that imposters demand. Scammers will say anything to get your money and they know how to play into your fears, hopes, or sympathies. They like gift cards because, once they’ve got the code on the back, the money is gone and almost impossible to trace. But knowing how these scams work can help you avoid them, and you can help even more by passing on the information to people you know.

If you paid a scammer with a gift card, report it as soon as possible. Tell the FTC about it – or any other scam – at ftc.gov/complaint.