

**I've fallen and I can't get up**

This all too familiar scam continues and has returned to Bucks County. This crime involves telephone scammers targeting seniors with the pitch of "free" life alert for seniors. They are not completely "free" because they always have monthly service fees attached.

The scam works like this; a senior consumer receives a telephone call with a recorded message citing the alarming statistics of injury and death resulting from falls in the home. The consumer is then given the option to press "1" if they'd like more information.

Pressing 1 results in being connected to a telemarketer, who will state someone they (the consumer) know, who wishes to remain anonymous, has paid for them to receive a free medical alert system, device or button. Another version of this message is that the individual's own physician, AARP or grant money has paid for them to have the device. It goes on to state that in order to claim this free device and enroll in the service, they must provide bank or credit card information to cover the "monthly monitoring fees for the emergency response system". The senior may also be promised additional incentives such as grocery saving certificates if they sign up for the device or button service.

The good news is that in this particular scam legal action has been taken. In July 2015, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) sued a New York company called Lifewatch USA for orchestrating this illegal telemarketing campaign, stating they must be held accountable "for the abusive and deceptive practices of its telemarketers." The FTC possesses phone scripts and other evidence to prove that Lifewatch USA was fully aware of the lies their telemarketers were using in an attempt to prey on the fears of senior citizens.

Unfortunately, while this particular scammer was put out of business, others have popped up to take their place. If you receive a call similar to this, the Bucks County Crime Against Older Adults Task Force recommends that you do the following:

- Hang up immediately. Do not press a key to speak to a live person.
- If you do speak to a live telemarketer, never provide them with any personal information. This includes, your name, phone number, date of birth, bank account number, credit card numbers, Medicare number, or Social Security number.
- Understand that having Caller ID will not necessarily help you determine genuine calls from scams. Telemarketers are able to fool these systems with fake phone numbers. For example, someone calling from a foreign country could easily disguise their number so that it pops up on your caller ID as a number local to you.
- When you receive scam calls, report them to the FTC by calling 1-800-382-1222 or visiting [ftc.gov/complaint](http://ftc.gov/complaint)

If you are interested and/or in need of purchasing a medical alert device system for yourself or a family member, check out the legitimate companies ratings/reviews at

<https://www.medicalalertadvice.com/medical-alert-advice-star-rating-system/>

<https://www.medicalalertadvice.com/reviews/lifestation-review/>

For additional tips and brochures on various scams as well as consumer related information please visit

[www.BucksCounty.org/ConsumerProtection](http://www.BucksCounty.org/ConsumerProtection) Click on Consumer Tips and Brochures

**Bucks County Crimes Against Older Adults Task Force**

Bucks County District Attorney's Office  
215-348-6344  
Bucks County Area Agency on Aging  
267-880-5700  
Bucks County Coroner's Office  
215-348-3852  
Network of Victim Assistance (NOVA)  
1-800-675-6900

A Woman's Place (AWP)  
1-800-220-8116  
Bucks County Office of Consumer Protection  
215-348-6060  
Bucks County Register of Wills  
215-348-6265

**[www.crimesagainstolderadultsbucks.org](http://www.crimesagainstolderadultsbucks.org)**  
**24 - HOUR HOTLINE: 1-800-490-8505**