

December 2016

Fraud Alert!

Top 3 Scams of 2016

#1. Tech Support Scams

It's rare that any technician from a PC manufacturer or tech support company would cold call non-client computer users and tell them that there's an immediate threat to their computers and that the company needs remote access to fix the problem. Yet, many people fall for this scam.

Scammers call victims and allege that they're with a big name tech company. Victims are told that their computers are either already infected or about to become infected with malware that can cause significant damage, such as operating system corruption or identity theft. The "technicians" then urge users to allow them to have remote access to troubleshoot and fix related issues. Scammers use these opportunities to infect systems with malware or perform other damage; or send users to third-party websites that cause damage. All of these actions are focused on the singular goal of giving scammers access to computers so they can cause errors and then charge for unnecessary repair services.

Fraud Alert Tip: Never give anyone remote access to your computer. Instead, hire a local computer repair service whenever necessary.

#2. Fake/Counterfeit Merchandise Scams

With so many online stores available, it's sometimes very difficult to know the difference between a legitimate e-commerce site and a fake one set up to steal money or a person's identity.

Scammers set up generic online stores that sell name brand items or mimic the websites of big name brand companies. On these sites, scammers sell fake or counterfeit products at significantly reduced prices designed to attract buyers looking for big deals on name brand merchandise. The over-reaching goal of these scammers is to gain access to the credit card numbers of their victims and then use the numbers to fraudulently make purchases, or make a buck with the information on the black market.

Fraud Alert Tip: To verify the identity of a website in question, always contact the brand company using the phone number on the company's official Contact Us or similar page.

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#3. Pets-for-Sale Scams

The promise of cuddly and cute puppies, kittens and other pets is another scam and has harmed a lot of people in 2016.

Pets-for-sale scammers create fake websites that claim to be associated with pet adoption or animal nurseries. On these sites, they offer a wide selection of pets for adoption or sale at prices significantly below the norm. Some sites even offer puppies for free to attract victims. With this scam, victims are told that they must pay for at least the insurance, shipping and other services associated with processing and delivering the pets. Victims are then required to make their purchases and/or pay their fees with non-returnable, cash-like forms of payment, including but not limited to: Moneygram, Western Union, Vanilla prepaid cards or wire transfer to a foreign bank account.

Fraud Alert Tip: Avoid paying for a pet using any type of cash transfer method.

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Bucks County Crimes Against Older Adults Task Force

Bucks County District Attorney's Office
215-348-6344
Bucks County Area Agency on Aging
215-348-0510
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

24 - HOUR HOTLINE: 1-800-490-8505