

DO NOT CLICK THE LINK! TECH SCAMS

We have received many reports recently from Bucks County residents who have been receiving telephone calls, emails, and seeing pop ups on their computer or smart phone from fraudsters claiming they are from major tech companies such as Microsoft, Apple or another technology related business.

The people making contact with the consumers will claim that they can “help you to fix your computer problem”. They may ask you for remote access to your computer or request that you log-in to a website.

Once you do this THEY take control of your computer. Their goal is to be able to steal your personal information stored on your computer or they will have the ability to remotely install spyware/ malware on your computer in an attempt to monitor your activities.

In addition, some consumers have reported that these scammers have asked for credit card info to pay for their service of “fixing the issues with your computer”.

If you do give them your credit card number they may tell you that the information you provided for the card is “not processing properly” and request information on a second credit card you may have that they can bill.

You may be wondering “how do people get drawn into this fraudulent encounter?”

- Consumers, that may or may not consider themselves “tech savvy”, can become vulnerable to a telephone call from someone who represents themselves as calling from a familiar, major tech company.
- Consumers may get a pop up alert on their computer stating that a virus has been detected and to call the telephone number provided or to click on the link provided to resolve the “problem.” The link is then impulsively “clicked” by the consumer. These popups may be followed with loud and intrusive warnings heard through the computer’s speakers while “freezing” your computer.

Become “scam savvy”**When browsing on the web do not fall for...**

- “Sponsored Links”
When using a search engine such as Google, the first items to appear are advertisements. Companies pay the various search engines for this advertising space, which helps pay for the search engine.
If someone searches for “tech support” or for a computer problem these ads will appear, often claiming to be associated with Microsoft or approved by them. Unfortunately, many of these links go directly to scammers. In an effort to combat this problem, Microsoft recently announced it is no longer allowing sponsored links for tech support on its Bing search engine.

What do I do if I've been scammed?

- Shut down and disconnect your device from the Internet. That puts an absolute stop on any external meddling. It also often automatically revokes remote access for when you restart.
- If you paid a tech support scammer with a credit or debit card, you may be able to stop the transaction. Contact your Credit Card Company or bank right away. Tell them what happened and ask if they can reverse the charges.
- If you gave a scammer remote access to your computer, update your computer's security software. Then run a scan and delete anything it identifies as a problem.
- Change your passwords right away. If you use the same password for other accounts or sites, change it there, too. Create a new password that is "strong".
- Although this service comes with a fee, you may want to consider taking your computer hard drive to a local, reputable computer repair company and request that they run a security check for hidden spyware.

For additional information on a variety of potential scams, please visit our website at <http://www.buckscounty.org/government/CommunityServices/ConsumerProtection/ConsumerTips>

Monthly Fraud Alerts brought to you by:

| Bucks County Crimes Against Older Adults Task Force | |
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| Bucks County District Attorney's Office: 215-348-6344 | A Woman's Place (AWP): 1-800-220-8116 |
| Bucks County Area Agency on Aging: 267-880-5700 | Bucks County Office of Consumer Protection: 215-348-6060 |
| Bucks County Coroner's Office: 215-348-3852 | Bucks County Register of Wills: 215-348-6265 |
| Network of Victim Assistance (NOVA): 1-800-675-6900 | US Dept. of Health and Human Services/OIG: 1-800-447-8477 |
| www.buckscounty.org/CrimesAgainstOlderAdults 24 - HOUR HOTLINE: 1-800-490-8505 | |