

## FRAUD ALERT

May 2017

### “No matter what you CALL it...”

Fraudster, bilker, conman, trickster, hoaxer, scammer, swindler, fast-talker, Double-crosser-the dictionary is filled with synonyms for these criminals who, along with modern technology, have found new ways of creating victims.

One of the most common and, yes, most annoying tools that these scammers use is a **Robo-dialer**, computer program that has the ability to dial hundreds of thousands of telephone numbers within an hours' time. They begin by choosing an area code for the program to dial, such as 215 or 610 in this area. The program will then dial a sequence of numbers looking/hoping for a “hit” on a real, legitimate telephone number. The robo-dialer program will then allow users to keep track of these legitimate telephone numbers.

It has become increasingly clear that, although many of these telephone scammers are calling from outside of the United States, they target consumers that live within the United States.

As they “hit on” legitimate telephone numbers, they will use “spoofers” to complete those calls. A “spoofing” program allows these tricksters to “trick” your caller ID into displaying a name and number different from the actual number that they are calling from. For example, your telephone rings, you check the caller ID and it shows that the incoming call is from the IRS in Washington, D.C.. You may notice that your caller ID log shows that you are receiving calls from all across the United States.

In addition to these Hoaxers using their new found list of currently active telephone numbers to attempt to scam you out of money, they sell their lists online to other crooks. Even worse news is that they actually create a “victims” list, which is a list of those consumers who had answered the call and spoke to the caller, some unaware that they were speaking to a swindler.

For instance, the spoofed “IRS” dials your number and you answer the call, at which point they tell you that they are from the IRS and that you owe money. If you engage in conversation with them by replying something such as “I paid my taxes. This must be a mistake but, I will check with my tax preparer”, your number may be put on a list of numbers/people that show a “potential to con”. This may very well lead to your number receiving even more telephone scam calls.

Our suggestion is to allow your answering machine to screen all calls that you receive that are not from your usual contacts. If you do answer a call and then suspect that it is a scam, simply hang-up the phone without saying anything to the caller.

In order to further safeguard yourself against these types of calls, you can also do the following:

- If you have access to the internet, sign your telephone number up to have robo-calls intercepted before you have a chance to pick up. This technology detects when a “machine” is calling your telephone number and will intercept it after just one ring, disconnecting the call automatically. You can do this online at

<https://www.nomorobo.com/>

Although we have heard many amusing stories from consumers of how they “handle” these calls (blowing a whistle, leading them on, etc.) we highly recommend that you DO NOT handle these scam calls in this manner. Doing so you could lead to a retaliation of sorts by the calls increasing in frequency and coming in at all hours of the day or night. If this were to happen, unfortunately, the only solution you will be left with is to change your telephone number in order to stop the calls.

Although signing up on the Do Not Call list is valuable, it cannot stop the robo-calls from coming through nor do these scammers seem to care about this list.

The Do Not Call List is a great service and, for the most part, legitimate businesses do honor the wishes of those who sign their number up. If you have not signed your telephone number up, you should. If you have signed up for this service but it’s been a few years, sign up again. You can do this online at <https://www.donotcall.gov/> or by calling 1-888-382-1222.

Keep in mind that these Fraudsters have plenty of time on their hands in making these intrusive calls and, we want you, our consumers, to have the best defense possible against receiving them.

Monthly Fraud alerts courtesy of:

BUCKS COUNTY CRIMES AGAINST OLDER ADULTS TASK FORCE

Bucks County District Attorney’s Office  
215-348-6344

A Woman’s Place (AWP)  
1-800-220-8116

Bucks County Area Agency on Aging  
215-348-0510

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

[www.crimesagainstolderadultsbucks.org](http://www.crimesagainstolderadultsbucks.org)

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