

September 2016

Fraud Alert!

TECH SUPPORT SCAMS

Fraudsters will remotely take over the consumer's computer, claim that there is spyware or another dangerous problem with the computer, and offer to fix it. But there normally **are** no real problems, and consumers pay \$500 or more to fix a nonexistent problem. Note that IT people working in assisted living facilities could be great resources in warning consumers about these scams.

How are people drawn into this fraud?

Sponsored Links

When someone does a search on a search engine like Google the first items to appear are advertisements. Companies pay the 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. But many of these links go directly to scammers. Microsoft recently announced it is no longer allowing sponsored links for tech support on its Bing search engine to combat this problem.

The Cold Call

Consumers may also get a call from someone claiming to be Microsoft, Comcast, Norton, Dell, or another company telling consumers that their computer sent out a signal saying that there is a spyware problem, and the company wants to remote and check for problems. Inevitably they find problems and offer to fix them – for a price.

Pop Ups

Many consumers are also getting pop up alerts on their computer saying that they have a virus and need to call a telephone number to resolve "problems." Sometimes these popups will even freeze the computer and loud warnings will come out of the speaker. When you call in response the "tech support" people go through the same dance and again lose their money.

What do I do if I've been scammed?

The Better Business Bureau (www.bbb.org) is always helpful, and if the scam company has a presence in the US it will often give refunds. You can also contact the Federal Trade Commission at 877-FTC-HELP (877-382-4357) or online at ftc.gov.

Reprinted from the June 7 NCEA ElderAbuse Listserv

September 2016

Monthly Fraud Alerts brought to you by:

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.crimesaginstolderadultsbucks.org

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