



Telemarketing Fraud

Most telemarketing sales calls are made by legitimate businesses offering legitimate products or services. However, phone fraud is a multibillion dollar business that involves selling everything from bad to nonexistent investments to misrepresented products and services.

If you have a phone, then you could be a victim of telemarketing fraud. Whether you become a victim is up to you. Be prepared to handle the swindler who might be calling so you will not become the next victim.

What You Should Know About Telemarketing Fraud

- There is no way to positively determine whether a sales call is legitimate by simply talking with someone on the phone. Before investing or buying, always check out the business or organization.
- Phone swindlers are likely to know more about you than you know about them. Depending on where they got your name, they may know such things as your age, income, health, hobbies, occupation, education level, marital status, and whether you have made phone purchases

in the past. They assume that you are interested in a bargain and are basically sympathetic to people in need.

- Fraudulent sales callers are skilled at creating false and misleading impressions and experts at verbal camouflage. Callers are well coached to “say whatever it takes” to get your business.
- Swindlers are extremely good at sounding as though they represent legitimate businesses.
- The person who “initiates” the phone call may be you. It is common for phone crooks to use direct mailings and advertise in reputable publications to solicit your contact.
- Victims of phone fraud seldom get their money back.

Tip-Offs That a Caller Could Be a Swindler

1. Caller uses high pressure sales tactics. They often insist that you make your decision right now!
2. If an offer sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
3. A request for your credit card number for any purpose other than to make a purchase.

4. Caller offers to send someone to your home or business to pick up the money, or some other method such as overnight mail to get your money quickly.
 5. A statement that something is “free” followed by a requirement to pay in some way to get your free item.
 6. An investment that is “without risk.”
 7. Caller is unwilling to provide written information or references (such as a bank or names of satisfied customers in your area).
 8. Any suggestion that you should make a purchase based on trust.
- Check out the company or organization. Swindlers are assuming that you will not bother to do so.
 - Seek a second opinion. Send information to your accountant, banker, or attorney for review.
 - Ask what recourse you have if you make a purchase and are not satisfied. Get any guarantee in writing.
 - Beware of testimonials that you cannot check out.
 - Do not give personal financial information over the phone.
 - If you are not interested, are subjected to high pressure tactics or just feel uneasy about the call, just hang up!

How to Avoid Becoming a Victim

- Never allow yourself to be pushed into a hurried decision.
- Do not make any investment or purchase you do not fully understand.
- Request written information by mail about the product, service, investment or charity and about the organization offering it. This should not be a problem for legitimate firms.
- Ask what state or federal agencies the firm is regulated by and/or is required to be registered with. Ask for a phone number or address to contact these agencies.

Ohio telemarketing regulations now require telemarketers to register with the Attorney General’s office. In addition, telemarketers need to send written invoices to customers and obtain signatures before drawing from customers’ accounts. If you think you have been contacted by a telemarketer swindler, contact the Ohio Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division at 1-800-282-0515 or contact your local law enforcement officials. *You will be not only protecting yourself but others!*

Reference

Adapted from: *Swindlers Are Calling*,
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Illinois, 1990

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