



Consumer Affairs Tabloid



Keeping you in the “KNOW”

287- CITY

Army Community Service Financial Readiness Branch

June 2008

Excerpt from: The Federal Trade Commission

www.ftc.gov/opa/2008/05/telephoney.shtm

FTC Announces ‘Operation Tele-PHONEY,’ Agency’s Largest Telemarketing Sweep

The Federal Trade Commission today, in cooperation with more than 30 international, federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, announced the largest telemarketing fraud sweep ever coordinated by the agency.

Through “Operation Tele-PHONEY,” the FTC has filed federal district court complaints against 13 allegedly deceptive telemarketing operations. Combined with the actions brought by other enforcement agencies, the sweep encompasses more than 180 cases that include both civil and criminal actions in the U.S. and Canada.

According to the FTC, in the 13 actions it is announcing today, more than **500,000 consumers** were defrauded by unscrupulous telemarketers, resulting in losses of more than **\$100 million**.



**WHO'S CALLING?
Recognize & Report
PHONE FRAUD**

www.ftc.gov/phonefraud

Anyone with a phone can be victimized by telemarketing scam artists. That's why every sales call you get by phone is an opportunity for a gut check: Ask yourself these questions – and if the answers give you some doubt about the caller's intentions or methods, end the call.

When you get a telemarketing sales call, ask yourself some questions:

Who's calling - and why? Telemarketers must tell you it's a sales call, the name of the seller and what they're selling before they make their pitch. If they don't give you the required information, say “no thanks,” and get off the phone.

What's their hurry? Fast talkers who use high pressure tactics could be hiding something. Take your time. Most legitimate businesses will give you time and written information about an offer before asking you to commit to a purchase.

If it's free, why are they asking me to pay? Question charges you need to pay to redeem a prize or gift. Free is free. If you have to pay, it's a purchase – not a prize or a gift.

Why am I “confirming” my account information – or giving it out at all? Some callers have your billing information before they call you. They're trying to get you to say “okay” so they can claim you approved the charge.

What time is it? The law allows telemarketers to call only between 8 am and 9 pm. A seller calling earlier or later is flouting the law. Report them to the FTC.

Do I want more calls like this one? If you don't want a business to call you again, say so. If they call back once you've asked them not to, they're breaking the law. Report them to the FTC.

Excerpt From: Texas Attorney General

Telemarketers and Junk Mail

www.oag.state.tx.us/consumer/telemarketers.shtml

Telemarketers want your money. The question is do you want to give it to them. If the answer is no, you need to be very, very careful with what you say. Or just hang up.

Telephone scammers change their pitch all the time, but many scams surface over and over again. Visit the Federal Trade Commission to see their list of telephone scams. Also check the Consumer Alerts section of our website for common scams we have uncovered. Here are many of them:

- ☎ Bogus Charity Solicitation
- ☎ Caller Leaves Stock Tip After Dialing "Wrong Number"
- ☎ Cheap Gas Coupon Offer
- ☎ Cheap Vacation Offers
- ☎ Government Employee Impersonators
- ☎ Government Grant Scams
- ☎ Offers to "Recover" Money for Victims of Telephone Fraud
- ☎ Phony Debt Collection
- ☎ Threats for Failed Jury Duty Appearance
- ☎ You Won the Lottery



From the Files of Fort Hood's Consumer Affairs Office

The Fort Hood Consumer Affairs Office is warning the public about a number of common scams which have resulted in Fort Hood soldiers, family members, and retirees losing thousands of dollars.

- ☎ Advance Fee loans – It is illegal for a loan company to require you to pay money up front.
- ☎ Phony Lotteries – You did not win millions in a lottery you did not enter. Foreign lotteries are illegal.
- ☎ Grants and Scholarships – You receive a call or letter stating you have been awarded a grant/scholarship and they need your financial information.
- ☎ Counterfeit Cashiers Checks or Postal Money orders - Your bank may be fooled and cash the check then a couple weeks later the check bounces and you are responsible for paying the money back.
- ☎ Internet Auctions – Emails stating they will sell you the item at a discount if you wire transfer the money.
- ☎ Mystery Shopper or other money earning opportunities – You are asked to cash a check and wire transfer the money (minus your fee) via Western Union.
- ☎ Scam artists may use the name of a legitimate company or falsely imply they are a member of the Better Business Bureau.

Four tips to remember – Don't wire transfer money to people you don't know; Checks and money orders are often fraudulent; Use caution when giving out your financial information; and If it sounds too good to be true it is!

For more information or to check out a potential scam call the Fort Hood Consumer Affairs Office at 287-2489

Back issues of the Consumer Affairs Tabloid are available on the Financial Readiness section of the ACS website at www.hoodmwr.com/acs.