

April
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SCAM ALERT!



A Consumer Update from Mat Heck, Jr., Prosecuting Attorney



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Montgomery County Prosecutor

THE TECH SUPPORT SCAM

Tech support scams (also known as computer repair scams) often begin when consumers receive a phone call or warning message on their computer screen claiming there is a problem with their computer. They are asked to follow a series of instructions and, ultimately, they're told to provide payment, grant remote access to their computer, and/or provide their personal information so the operator can address the supposed problem. Consumers who follow the instructions risk losing their money and compromising their personal information.



Instead of fixing problems, phony tech support operators just cause more problems. They take money to correct problems that don't actually exist, and they put consumers' personal information at risk. We want to warn people to be very careful any time they get an unexpected message or call saying there's a problem with their device.

DON'T FALL FOR THE TECH SUPPORT SCAM:

- **Don't give a stranger access to your device.** If you receive an unexpected call or message saying there's a problem with your computer or other device, don't give the caller remote access to your device, don't provide personal information, and don't buy any software the caller claims to be selling. Instead, hang up.
- **Beware of pop-up messages.** Scammers may use full-screen warnings or smaller pop-up messages made to look like legitimate virus warnings. Don't click on suspicious links or pop-ups, and don't call phone numbers contained in these messages or ads.
- **Know where to find real help.** To find legitimate computer repair help, look through the tech support information found with your security or antivirus software package, contact your internet service provider, or locate documentation from your computer

manufacturer. Also, always keep your antivirus and anti-malware software subscriptions up to date.

- **Be wary if you're asked to pay using gift cards or wire transfers.** Con artists often ask for payment using one of these methods because it is difficult to trace or recover the money after it's sent.

IN THE EVENT YOU THINK YOU ARE BEING SCAMMED IN THIS WAY:

Make a report to the Federal Trade Commission at www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov.

The above ALERT is part of the Montgomery County Prosecuting Attorney's initiative to help citizens become aware of ways they can avoid becoming a victim, or ways they can help stop criminal activity that may be occurring. Upon request, the office can provide presentations on crime prevention actions and activities to halt crime and increase the quality of life in our community.

If you would like additional information on the above ALERT, or would like additional information regarding our programs to assist consumers in general and/or seniors in particular, please contact Kimberly Melnick, Supervising Attorney, Adult Protection Unit, or Anthony Schoen, Supervising Attorney, Fraud and Economic Crimes Unit at 937-225-5757.

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