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SCAM ALERT!



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



MAT HECK, Jr.
Montgomery County Prosecutor

"Robocalls"

AUTOMATED "ROBOCALLERS" BECOMING MORE COMMON

In an age when cellphones have become extensions of our bodies, "robocallers" now follow people wherever they go, disrupting meetings, church services, and bedtime stories with their children.

Through automated calls have long plagued consumers, the volume has skyrocketed in recent years, reaching an estimated 3.4 billion in April, according to YouMail, which collects and analyzes calls through its robocall blocking service. That's an increase of almost 900 million a month compared with a year ago.



The deceptive measures have become more sophisticated. In one tactic, known as "neighborhood spoofing," robocallers use local numbers in the hope that recipients will be more likely to pick up. These calls mimic your area code and the first three digits of your phone number.

The calls are increasing despite stepped-up enforcement and other efforts to stamp them out; robocallers find new phone numbers to hide behind once their numbers are ignored or blocked.

HOW TO REDUCE THE RISK:

The federal [DO NOT CALL LIST](#) may prevent some (but not all) legitimate companies from calling people on the list, but it does little to deter fraudsters and marketers, some of them overseas, who are willing to take their chances and flout the law.

The Federal Trade Commission is looking into new laws that will help phone companies block these calls.

Until then, the best deterrence is to NOT ANSWER calls from numbers you do not know.

To add your phone number to the Federal Do Not Call registry, visit <http://www.donotcall.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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Montgomery County Prosecutor's Office
info@mcpo.com



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