



news release

BBB Serving Central, Northern & Western Arizona
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BBB Warns Consumers of Tech Support Phone Scam

(Prescott, AZ – October 30, 2013) The Better Business Bureau (BBB) Yavapai County office continues to receive reports from Northern Arizona consumers who describe unsolicited phone calls from fraudsters who claim to work with nationally recognized IT companies or “Windows”.

Consumers allege the caller mentions that problems have been found on the consumer’s computer and for a fee, will fix it. BBB warns that this is typically a ploy by scammers to gain access to your computer and first warned about a similar scam last year.

“Scammers hope you won’t notice their play on words of legitimate companies or the lack of evidence that your computer actually needs to be fixed,” said Mary Hawkes, Director of the BBB Yavapai office. “The fraudsters want remote access to your computer—which potentially makes your personal, private and financial information vulnerable.”

BBB has identified the following trends used by tech support phone scammers:

- Unsolicited caller claims to work with a well-known tech company or “Windows”.
- Caller claims that a problem has been identified on consumer’s computer. Caller also claims to provide a solution for the problem.
- Caller instructs the consumer to key specific keystrokes, potentially allowing the caller remote access.
- Caller may instruct consumer to download software—that unknowingly installs malicious software allowing the caller to capture sensitive information.
- Caller may demand payment to fix computer issues.

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“Would you open your door to strangers, invite them into your home, allow them to snoop around and take whatever they want?” said Mary Hawkes. “Replace the word ‘home’ with ‘computer’ and this is essentially what you are doing if you allow an unknown caller remote access to your computer.”

BBB suggests the following tips for consumers to stay safe online:

- **Protect your computer** and personal information with a firewall and anti-virus program.
- **Update your operating system** and web browser software regularly.
- **Protect your passwords.** Do not use the same password for each online account that you have.
- **Be wary of unsolicited calls** claiming a security problem or virus with your computer.
- **Never give personal or financial information** to unsolicited callers.
- If you received a call and allowed remote access to your computer, your information may be vulnerable. Immediately **run anti-malware and anti-virus programs.** Contact a reputable computer repair technician to further examine your computer for issues.
- If you received provided credit card or bank account information to an unsolicited caller, **contact your financial institution immediately.**

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For more information or to schedule an interview with a BBB spokesperson, contact Mary Hawkes at 928-772-3410 or email mhawkes@arizonabbb.org.

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