

Southern Pines Police Department
Safety Tips
Telemarketers

Do you receive phone calls from telemarketers? Do you accept them? While many of us desire to take advantages of the opportunities they offer, many of us do not want to receive these calls at our homes. You can stop unwanted telemarketing phone calls by registering with the “Do Not Call” List. The process is quite simple. You can either call 1-888-382-1222 or simply log onto the internet and register at www.donotcall.gov. You must call from the phone you wish to register and the registration is good for five (5) years. This will stop those unwanted phone calls at dinner-time or any time! There are exceptions, which include organizations you do business with, tax-exempt nonprofit organizations, political organizations, and polling firms, which will still be allowed to call you. If you do not want these calls, you can register your preference with the organization and, while they are not required to honor your wishes under these circumstances, most companies that value your business will do so. If you have been registered on the “Do Not Call” list for at least three (3) months and are still receiving phone calls from telemarketers, obtain information about the organization that has called you. Record the date, time and the name of the person if possible who is calling, as well as the full business name, address and phone number. Then contact either the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division or the United States Federal Trade Commission. Both federal and North Carolina laws are there to protect consumers and violations carry stiff fines and other penalties.

How to Prevent or Avoid Telemarketing Fraud

While some telemarketers call to pitch legitimate goods and services, there are also telemarketers whose purpose isn't to sell anything but rather to defraud you. The Federal Trade Commission estimates that fraudulent telemarketers scam as much as \$40 billion a year from U.S. consumers. To make sure you don't fall victim to a telemarketing scam, follow these tips:

- You never have to make a purchase or pay taxes, fees or other expenses in advance in order to receive a prize.
 - Anyone claiming that you must do so is trying to defraud you.
 - Never make an advance payment to anyone who promises you a loan or credit card. It is illegal under state, federal and Canadian law to require payment in advance in order to receive a loan or be referred to someone who will issue you a loan or credit card.
 - It is illegal to offer lottery tickets over the phone or through the mail. Anyone doing so is trying to cheat you.
 - Never give your bank account, credit card or Social Security number to someone you don't know who calls you on the phone.
 - If you get a call that you think may be telemarketing fraud, or if you think that someone you know has been the victim of a scam, call the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Office at (919) 716-6000. If the call appears to come from Canada or mentions Canada, also contact the Canadian telemarketing fraud task force Operation PhoneBusters at (888) 495-8501, a toll-free call.
 - Watch out for your senior citizen friends and family. Be especially vigilant about seniors who suffer from Alzheimer's Disease, other forms of cognitive design or depression.
 - Frequent trips to the Western Union office or frequent pick-ups by overnight courier services can be signs that someone is a victim of telemarketing fraud. Once a fraudulent telemarketer discovers a victim, that victim's name will be sold to hundreds of other scammers.
- (SOURCE: North Carolina Attorney General's Office.)

For more information or a presentation on this topic, contact the Community Services Coordinator at (910) 692-2732.