



Consumer Complaints:

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For Immediate Release

CONSUMER ALERT: BEWARE OF HOLIDAY SEASON PHONE SCAMS

FCC & FTC Hosting Webinar on Monday to Help Consumers Avoid Holiday Scams

WASHINGTON, December 1, 2017—The Federal Communications Commission is reminding consumers to be on the lookout for scam callers during this holiday season. Illegal robocallers often spoof caller ID information and try to use real events to defraud consumers by tricking them into providing money or personal information.

Fraudulent callers may pretend to be debt collectors, offer holiday deals, or use fear to extort money. Be aware that scammers can use other information-gathering tools and may know more about you beyond your phone number. Do not assume that because they know your name, the name of a company you use, a recent financial transaction, or some other detail, that they are legitimate. Technology also allows scammers to more easily and cheaply spoof telephone numbers, manipulating the caller ID information so that they appear to be calling from your local area – so-called “neighbor spoofing.”

To help consumers confront these and other holiday scams, **the FCC is partnering with the Federal Trade Commission to host a free consumer webinar on Monday, December 4 at 2 pm EST.**

Consumers can learn more and stream the webinar here: <https://go.usa.gov/xnK5p>. The Commission also provides helpful consumer protection tips on social media via #FCCtips.

FCC Chairman Ajit Pai outlines tips for consumers in this new video:

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/j8m-NDEWiBQ?rel=0>

Consumer Tips

- Don't answer calls from unknown numbers. Let them go to voicemail.
- If the caller claims to be from a legitimate company or organization, hang up and call them back using a valid number found on their website or on your latest bill if you do business with them.
- If you answer and the caller (often a recording) asks you to press a button to stop receiving calls, or asks you to say “yes” in response to a question, just hang up. Scammers often use these tricks to identify, and then target, live respondents, or to use your “yes” to apply unauthorized charges on your bill.

- If you answer and the caller asks for payment using a gift card, it's likely a scam. Legitimate organizations like law enforcement will not ask for payment with a gift card.
- If you receive a scam call, file a complaint with the [FCC Consumer Complaint Center](#) by selecting the "phone" option and selecting "unwanted calls" as your issue. The collective data we receive helps us track trends and supports our enforcement investigations.
- If you have lost money as a result of a scam call, contact your local law enforcement agency for assistance.
- Ask your phone company if it offers a robocall blocking service. If not, encourage them to offer one. You can also visit the FCC's [website](#) for more information about illegal robocalls and resources on available robocall blocking tools to help reduce unwanted calls.
- Consider registering all of your telephone numbers in the [National Do Not Call Registry](#). Lawful telemarketers use this list to avoid calling consumers on the list.

Anyone who believes they have been targeted by a robocall scam may file a complaint with the [FCC Consumer Complaint Center](#), the [FTC Complaint Assistant](#) or the Better Business Bureau's [Scam Tracker](#).

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