

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM PHONE FRAUD

Most telemarketers are honest business people, but you must protect yourself from phone fraud.

Deceptive telemarketers use phone fraud, scams by using the phone to obtain payment from you for a product or service that you don't need or does not exist.

Deceptive telemarketers use the phone to:

- Obtain your private banking information, credit card number or personal information.
- Offer you a prize for which you must pay.
- Obtain your money fraudulently.

Recognize a scam. Here are some classic signs of a deceptive telemarketer:

- *It sounds too good to be true.* You are told that you won a big prize in a contest that you did not enter. You are offered a once-in-a-lifetime investment that offers huge returns. You are told that you can buy into a lottery ticket pool that you cannot lose.
- *You must pay or you can't play.* "You're a winner!" but you must agree to send money to the caller in order to pay for delivery, processing, taxes, duties or other fees in order to receive your prize.
- *You must give them your private financial information.* The caller asks for your banking and credit card information.
- *Will that be cash...or cash?* Deceptive telemarketers ask you to send cash or a money order rather than a cheque or credit card. Cash is untraceable and can't be cancelled.
- *It's the Manager calling.* The person calling claims to be a government official, tax officer, banking official, lawyer or some other person in authority.
- *The stranger calling wants to become your best friend.* The person calls you by your first name and asks a lot of personal questions. Deceptive telemarketers love finding out if you're lonely and willing to talk. Once they know that, they'll try to convince you that they are your friend.
- *It's a limited opportunity and you're going to miss out.* If you are pressured to make a purchase decision immediately, it's probably not a legitimate deal.
- Protect Yourself;
- *Legitimate telemarketers have nothing to hide.* Deceptive telemarketers will say anything to part you from your hard-earned money.
- *Be cautious.* You have the right to check out any caller by requesting **written information, a call back number, references and time to think over the offer.**
- Legitimate businesses will be happy to offer you with the information.
- Always be careful about providing confidential personal information, **especially banking or credit card details**, unless you are certain that the company is legitimate.

If you're in doubt about a caller, **your best defence is to simply hang up. It's not rude, it's smart.** Ask the advice of a close friend or relative. Rely on people you can trust.