

Common Phone Scams Explained

TECH SUPPORT SCAM

HOW IT WORKS:

Tech support scammers may call and impersonate a computer technician for well-known companies like Microsoft or even your internet provider. The caller will tell you there's a problem with your computer, like it has a virus or is infected with malware, and ask you to give them remote access to your device so they can identify the problem. They may try to talk you into buying unnecessary software or a service to "fix" the computer or may ask you to provide personal information. Scammers may initially sound professional and well-informed using a lot of technical jargon, but they may become overly persistent threatening things like losing all your personal data if you don't do what they want.

The goal for these scammers is to get access to your personal information and then charge you for the "services" they claim to have provided. These fraudsters often use remote access to install malware and maintain access to your computer and sensitive data like usernames and passwords, even after your call has ended, without your knowledge.

RED FLAGS TO RECOGNIZE:

1. You're contacted out of the blue. The only time you should be contacted about a problem with your computer is if you initiated that contact.
2. There is a sense of urgency to act. Slow down. Scammers are counting on you to panic and act quickly before you have time to notice the red flags.
3. Threatening and vulgar language. Technical support professionals should act professional at all times. If you feel like you're being pushed or threatened, end the interaction immediately.
4. Requires you to provide personal information. Scammers can't access your computer without information provided by you. It may not seem like traditional personal information, but it is information only you have.

HOW TO HANDLE IT:

Hang up! Don't engage, provide any personal information or give control of your computer to anyone who contacts you.

Tech support scams can be reported to the Federal Trade Commission at [FTC.gov/Complaint](https://www.ftc.gov/Complaint) or by calling 1-877-382-4357. You can also report them to the South Dakota Attorney General's Division of Consumer Protection by calling 605-773-4400.