

SCAMS REPORT

MILTON TOWNSHIP S.A.L.T. COUNCIL MEETING NOVEMBER 14, 2022

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Cable TV or Internet Scam

How it works: You receive a telephone call from someone claiming to represent your cable TV or internet provider. The caller informs you that for a limited time you have an opportunity to lower your monthly charge. You're told your provider has partnered with another company and your monthly charge can be reduced if you "prepay" a portion of your bill. You're given the option of prepaying with a credit card or a gift card. If you choose to pay with a credit card, the caller asks for the card information. If you prefer to pay with a gift card, you're told to go out and purchase a card and call back with the number on the card.

Here's what is actually happening: This is a scam! If you fall for it and choose to prepay with a credit card, unauthorized purchases will be made and charged to your account. The scammer will also drain money from your account with the information you provided. If you decide to pay with a gift card, the money will be gone once you give the scammer the number on the card. You will not be able to recover any of the money. Regardless of how you remit payment, you will experience a large financial loss. As one might expect, your monthly TV or internet charge will not be reduced.

How to protect yourself

- If you receive a call from your internet or cable provider offering you a special rate if you prepay a portion of your bill, hang up the phone. You are dealing with a scammer. Do not provide any personal or financial information to the caller. A legitimate provider will never ask a customer to prepay a portion of their bill in exchange for a reduced rate.
- If you're uncertain as to whether a call claiming to be from your TV or internet provider is legitimate, call the company's customer service number listed on a past bill or the company's website. Do not call the number that called you or one that someone else told you to call.
- Do not provide your personal or financial information to unsolicited callers, regardless of who a caller claims to be. Hang up the phone.
- If you're ever instructed to pay for goods or services with a gift card, you are dealing with a scammer. Hang up the phone. Legitimate businesses will never ask you to pay with a gift card. Gift cards should be considered the same as cash and handled accordingly.
- Be aware that scammers are able to display a phony telephone number on your caller ID. This is known as "spoofing." Thus, a caller claiming to be from the IRS, your bank, a utility company, or your TV or internet provider may actually be a criminal even though a legitimate telephone number appears on your caller ID. (NOTE: Recently-developed caller ID authentication technology known as STIR / SHAKEN will reduce the occurrence of spoofed calls. This technology enables subscribers to verify that callers are who they say they are and that a call originated from the number displayed on the caller ID.)
- If you receive an email message instead of a telephone call from your TV or internet provider about this "promotion," delete the message. Do not click on links or open attachments in the message.
- Before you make an online payment for goods or services, be sure the vendor's website on which you're asked for financial information includes a "padlock" icon preceding the URL in the address bar at the top of the screen. The padlock icon confirms the website is certified as encrypted and secure.
- If you are a victim of this scam, report it to the following agencies:
 - Federal Trade Commission (*ftc.gov*),
 - Illinois Attorney General Senior Citizens Consumer Fraud Hotline (1-800-243-5377), and
 - Your local police department.

[Source: FTC]