



Don't Fall for the 90# Telephone Scam

A legacy phone scam using the 90# buttons on business landline telephones is still around, targeting phones served by a private branch exchange (PBX) or private automatic branch exchange (PABX).

How this scam occurs

You receive a call at your office from someone claiming to be a telephone company employee investigating technical problems with your line, or checking up on calls supposedly placed to other states or countries from your line. The caller asks you to aid the investigation by either dialing 90# or by transferring the call to an outside line before hanging up. By doing this, you may be enabling the caller to place calls that are billed to your office telephone number.

What you should know

- Telephone company employees checking for technical and other types of telephone service or billing problems would not call and ask a subscriber to dial a specific series of numbers before hanging up.
- Telephone company employees would not request subscribers to connect the caller to an outside line.
- These types of calls are used to trick subscribers into taking actions that will enable the caller to place fraudulent calls.

What you can do

If your place of business uses either a PBX or a PABX, your company telecommunications manager should contact the equipment manufacturer and the telephone companies that provide you with local and long distance service and ask for information about security systems available to protect your telephone system from toll fraud. You should also consider asking about any monitoring services that help detect unusual telephone system usage.

To avoid becoming a victim of this scam, educate yourself and other employees. Take the following steps if you think that a telephone call is fraudulent or is part of this scam:

- Ask the caller for their name and telephone number.
- Tell the caller you are going to call the telephone company immediately to determine whether or not there is a problem with the line.
- Immediately hang up the receiver; do not dial any numbers or transfer the caller to an outside line before hanging up.
- Find the telephone number for your telephone service provider and/or its security office and report the suspicious phone call. Be prepared to provide details of the call to the telephone company representative.
- Contact your local law enforcement officials.

Consumer Help Center

For more information on consumer issues, visit the FCC's Consumer Help Center at www.fcc.gov/consumers.

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