

FCC Consumer Alert

809 Phone Scam - Beware

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has become aware of a long distance phone scam that may lead consumers to inadvertently ring up high charges on their phone bills.

The Scam Works Something Like This

- You get an e-mail, voicemail or page telling you to call a phone number with an 809, 284, or 876 (or some other three-digit) area code to collect a prize, find out about a sick relative, engage in sex talk, etc.
- You assume you are making a domestic long distance call – as “809”, “284”, and “876” (and other three-digit area codes involved in this scam) appear to be typical three-digit U.S. area codes.
- When you dial the “809”, “284” or “876” (or other three-digit) area code plus the number, however, you’re actually connected to a phone number outside the United States, often in Canada or the Caribbean, and charged international call rates. (In this case, 809 goes to the Dominican Republic, 284 goes to the British Virgin Islands, and 876 goes to Jamaica.)
- You don’t find out about the higher international call rates until you receive your phone bill.

To Minimize the Risk of This Happening to You

- Check any area codes before returning calls.
- If you do not otherwise make international calls, ask your local phone company to block outgoing international calls on your line.

Filing a Complaint with the FCC

There is no charge to file an informal complaint with the FCC. Your letter should include your name, address, telephone number or numbers involved with your complaint, a telephone number where you can be reached during the business day, and the name of your long distance carrier. Your complaint letter should also provide as much specific information as possible, such as:

- an explanation of the circumstances that led to your complaint;
- the names of all telephone or other companies involved with your complaint;

(More)
→



- the names and telephone numbers of the telephone company employees that you talked to in an effort to resolve your complaint;
- the dates that you talked with these employees; and
- any other information that would help the FCC to process your complaint.

Your local telephone company also often has records that are essential to the processing of your complaint.

You should mail your complaint to:

Federal Communications Commission
 Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau
 Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division
 445 12th Street, SW
 Washington, DC 20554

To file a complaint electronically, go to www.fcc.gov/cgb/complaints.html. Consumers can also file by e-mail at fccinfo@fcc.gov.

Filing a Complaint with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC)

The FTC is revising its regulations to give consumers more rights when they are victims of international phone call scams. Among other things, the rules will require that calling costs be disclosed to the consumer before his/her call is connected.

Callers may submit their complaints, in writing, to the FTC. The FTC does not typically investigate or resolve specific complaints, but they look for trends or patterns when an issue appears to warrant action. FTC complaints should be mailed to:

Consumer Response Center
 Federal Trade Commission
 600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
 Washington, DC 20580

FTC toll-free number: 1-877-382-4357

FTC e-mail address for reporting fraud: crc@ftc.gov

###

For this or any other consumer publication in an accessible format (electronic ASCII text, Braille, large print, or audio) please write or call us at the address or phone number below, or send an e-mail to FCC504@fcc.gov.

To receive information on this and other FCC consumer topics through the Commission's electronic subscriber service, click on www.fcc.gov/cgb/emailservice.html.

This document is for consumer education purposes only and is not intended to affect any proceeding or cases involving this subject matter or related issues.

030703

