

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Telephone Company Impersonation Scam Could Expose Wireless Accounts, VIPD Says

VIPD says callers posing as telephone company or security representatives are sending verification codes and asking customers to read them aloud, which could allow criminals to enter wireless accounts, transfer numbers and access personal information.

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The V.I. Police Department is warning residents about a telephone scam in which callers impersonate mobile-service provider or security department representatives and attempt to obtain one-time verification codes that could give them access to customers' wireless accounts.

According to reports received by the department, a scammer calls an individual and falsely claims to represent a telephone company or its security department. During the conversation, the caller sends a verification code to the person's mobile device and instructs them to read the code aloud over the phone.

Once the code is obtained, the scammer may be able to bypass account-security measures, access the customer's wireless account, make unauthorized changes, transfer telephone numbers or view personal information.

The access could also be used to facilitate identity theft or financial fraud, police said.

VIPD advised consumers that legitimate representatives will not ask customers to disclose one-time verification codes, passwords, personal identification numbers or other account-security credentials over the telephone.

Anyone asked to provide a verification code or security information should end the call immediately and contact their mobile provider through its official customer-service channels to determine whether there is a legitimate concern involving the account.

Consumers are also being advised to monitor their accounts for unauthorized changes and update their passwords and security PINs if they notice suspicious activity.

Attempts should be reported to the customer's wireless provider and local consumer-protection authorities.

The VIPD release included a warning attributed only to an unidentified "[Spokesperson."

"Verification codes are designed to protect customers, but scammers are increasingly using social engineering tactics to trick individuals into sharing them," the release stated. "Consumers should treat any unsolicited request for security codes as a potential fraud attempt."

Anyone who believes they may have already provided a verification code to a scammer should immediately contact their wireless provider to secure the account and prevent additional unauthorized access.

For more information, residents may contact the VIPD Economic Crimes Unit at 340-774-3942, extension 5618.