

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Computers Of Local Residents Being Hacked As New Scam Hits V.I.

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The computers of local residents are being illegally accessed by hackers seeking to gather information that could lead to residents' bank accounts and other private information, the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs (DLCA) announced Friday in an effort to warn of ongoing fraud attempts by scam artists.

According to DLCA, there have been recent reports of "customers receiving fraudulent phone calls from individuals claiming to represent local communications companies. The caller falsely states that there is a security breach that they need to address and requests information to be able to access the customer's computers remotely. Once the customer provides the necessary information, the customer is no longer able to access their own

computer."

DLCA officials say they are certain the calls are a part of a scheme to hack into individuals' personal computers for "illegal and nefarious purposes."

The department says it has issued warnings before, however "a number of new, less obvious types of scams have presented themselves in the Virgin Islands, resulting in a flow of new consumer complaints."

Older scams by perpetrators have included sending enticing emails or making telephone calls, sending invoices, and bank checks or letters have been replaced by newer, more complex schemes, "such as enticements and requests for information from businesses who publicly advertise both locally and nationally," department officials said.

"Consumers must ask questions or end the phone call completely if you do not feel comfortable disclosing the information," said Devin Carrington, DLCA commissioner designee.

The commissioner urged residents not to share important information over the phone, internet or other forms of communication unless they are certain the information is being shared with a reputable person.

Residents may contact DLCA's Division of Consumer Services at (340) 714-3522 on St. Thomas/St. John or 340-713-3522 on St. Croix with questions about the legitimacy of certain phone calls or to file a complaint.

Image Credit: *Locker Dome*