

The Virgin Islands Consortium

New Telephone Scam Impacts Territory

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ST. CROIX -- The Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs has issued a press release making known that a new telephone scam that seeks to fraudulently extract money from unsuspecting Virgin Islanders is currently affecting the territory, and is warning residents to be on the lookout for such calls.

According to DLCA, Virgin Islanders are receiving phone calls from persons from the so-called "United States Government Reclaim Department", who claim to be hired by the federal government. No such agency of the United States government exists. The scammers go on to inform the call recipients that the "Reclaim Department" is in possession of monies due to them from illegal bank charges taken from bank customers over the years. The callers may seem friendly and genuine. They even give their names

which are likely fictitious.

But in order to receive the money, the scammers instruct the call recipient to send via MoneyGram a “refundable claim fee” of \$290.00. The call recipient is even given a claim number to place on the money transmission form. But when pressed for further information to ascertain whether the caller is trustworthy, the caller ends the call, according to the release.

DLCA says it was able to obtain a phone number, 509-643-4474 as a source of the calls. When the department contacted the callers, provided them with a claim number, and insisted on an address to which to send the money to, the caller instructed that the address will be provided once the recipient was physically at the MoneyGram location. When pressed further on an address to which to send the refundable claim fee, the individual on the line hung up.

This is but the latest in a series of ongoing telephone scams developed by unscrupulous individuals attempting to cheat Virgin Islanders out of their hard earned money, DLCA says. While such scams may tempt some persons to follow the fraudsters instructions, especially in these difficult economic times, the department continues to advise the general public to be wary of such schemes.

Residents are asked not to provide any personal information like credit card or bank account numbers to such callers. The release further stated that residents should abstain from sending hard-earned money to unsolicited callers. Generally, such calls should be ended as quickly as possible and any information gleaned from the call should be reported to DLCA at 714.3522 on St. Thomas or 713.3522 here.

The department concluded by reminding residents that if something sounds too good to be true, it probably is.