

The Virgin Islands Consortium

New Scam In VI Seeks To Steal Unsuspecting Hotel Guests' Credit Card Information

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The Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs on Monday advised residents territory-wide of the latest information in a number of scams occurring in the Virgin Islands. In this case, scammers are targeting guests at local hotels, according to D.L.C.A.

"I received a phone call at my hotel phone at about 1:30 a.m. during my recent stay at a hotel in St. Thomas," D.L.C.A. Commissioner Devin Carrington said. "The scammer stated that he was a part of the hotel audit team and that there had been a glitch in the hotel's computer system that required him to verify my credit card information that had been submitted during my check-in. He also stated that he needed to rectify the situation by 2:00 a.m., the audit deadline."

The scammer went on to state that in order rectify the situation, "I had to either immediately come to the front desk and present credit card information or, as he stated, 'take care of the situation right now.' While the caller didn't say as much, I assumed that meant to present the credit card information to him then and there on the phone," Mr. Carrington explained.

The caller was assuming that the credit card number would be presented to him on the phone, rather than get dressed and go downstairs to the lobby at that time in the morning. Being suspicious of the caller, the commissioner hung up and quickly called the front desk to inquire about the situation, but no one answered. He proceeded downstairs and was informed that the hotel had made no such call; reports had previously been made about such a scam by other hotel guests.

It was not clear whether those guests had fallen prey to the scam by disclosing credit card information to the caller. But given the circumstances, it was [apparent that] the scammers were using the hotel's telephone line and/or telephone system to perpetrate their scheme, Mr. Carrington said.

Guests and residents staying in hotels in the U.S. Virgin Islands are advised to be cautious of suspicious phone calls such as the one reported, D.L.C.A. warned. The government agency is urging residents not to provide any credit card or other financial information over the phone regardless of who the caller presents himself or herself to be. The public is also asked to be aware that scammers are very clever and constantly invent new schemes to convince unsuspecting individuals in order to steal one's hard-earned dollars.

To make reports of suspected scams, contact DLCA by calling (340) 713-3522 on St. Croix and call (340) 714-3522 on St. Thomas.