

FCC Consumer Advisory

"809" Phone Scam - Beware

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has become aware of a long distance phone scam that may lead consumers to inadvertently incur 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", "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", "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", "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.

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

If you are billed for a call you made as a result of this scam, first try to resolve the matter with your telephone company. If you are unable to resolve it directly, you can file a complaint with the FCC. There is no charge for filing a complaint. You can file your complaint using an FCC on-line complaint form found at support.fcc.gov/complaints.htm. You can also file your complaint with the FCC's Consumer Center by e-mailing fccinfo@fcc.gov; calling 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322) voice or 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322) TTY; faxing 1-866-418-0232; or writing to:

(More)
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Federal Communications Commission
Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau
Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554.

What to Include in Your Complaint

The best way to provide all the information the FCC needs to process your complaint is to complete fully the on-line complaint form. When you open the on-line complaint form, you will be asked a series of questions that will take you to the particular section of the form you need to complete. If you do not use the on-line complaint form, your complaint, at a minimum, should indicate:

- your name, address, e-mail address, and phone number where you can be reached;
- the telephone and account numbers that are the subject of your complaint;
- the name and phone numbers of any companies involved with your complaint;
- the amount of any disputed charges, whether you paid them, whether you received a refund or adjustment to your bill, the amount of any adjustment or refund you have received, an explanation if the disputed charges are related to services in addition to residential or business telephone services; and
- the details of your complaint and any additional relevant information.

Filing a Complaint with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC)

If you feel that you are a victim of an international phone scam, you can file a complaint with the FTC online at <https://www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov>. You can also submit a complaint by calling the FTC toll-free at 1-877-382-4357 (voice) or 1-866-653-4261 (TTY), or writing to:

Federal Trade Commission
CRC - 240
600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20580.

For More Information

For information about other telecommunications issues, visit the FCC's Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau Web site at www.fcc.gov/cgb, or contact the FCC's Consumer Center using the information provided for filing a complaint.

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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/contacts/.

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.

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