



Saskatchewan
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The Commercial Crime and Fraud Sections with the Regina Police Service, Saskatoon Police Service, Saskatchewan Financial Services Commission and the RCMP have joined forces to promote March as Fraud Awareness Month (www.sacp.ca/fraudawareness) to Saskatchewan residents and consumers.

Public education and awareness is key in preventing and reducing the number of victims of fraud. During the second week of Fraud Awareness Month, the fraudulent activity to be profiled is the computer virus scam, one of the top reported scams for 2011.

In this scam the fraudster, posing as a computer security employee allegedly representing a legitimate company, calls a person (victim) and tells them their computer is running slow or has viruses. They then offer to repair the computer over the Internet. The steps the fraudster has the victim take can involve the installation of software or even allowing the fraudster to remotely access to their computer. The fraudster will often ask for payment for the software or repair service via credit card with the typical amount being between \$ 200.00 - \$300.00.

Downloading software provided by the fraudster and allowing a third party to install software or to remotely access your computer carries inherent risks. Keyloggers or other malicious software could be installed in order to capture sensitive data such as financial information, including online banking user names and passwords. Personal information can also be obtained from your computer and make you vulnerable to identity fraud.

Another way that the fraudster can contact a potential victim is through "Vishing". This involves the use of VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol), or phone service over the internet. A recorded message tells the potential victim their computer has a virus. The recorded message will also ask the victim to enter personal information and a credit card number, as VoIP recognizes telephone



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keystrokes. Once the fraudster has this information, you could become a victim of identity theft and fraud.

- The key to not becoming a victim is to just hang up.
- Be suspicious of any unsolicited calls where someone claims you have a computer security problem.
- The best way to protect your computer is to keep your anti-virus protection and other security software up to date.
- Never provide personal or financial information over the phone to an unsolicited caller.
- Be cautious and take steps to safely store personal and financial information on your computer.

In Canada, the police and the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre (Phonebusters) have received 7,475 complainants regarding this scam over the past year. Over 1,000 people suffered a financial loss, with the total loss amounting to \$303,913.93. In Saskatchewan, there have been 323 complaints involving 40 victims and a total loss of \$11,599.84.

Fraud Awareness is part of a national crime prevention campaign to increase Canadians' awareness of and knowledge about different types of fraud in order to help citizens to not become fraud victims. RCMP Saskatchewan's "F" Division Commercial Crime Section has offices in Regina and Saskatoon. Their role is to reduce the impact of economic crime on Canadians by maintaining the integrity of our economy through public education, crime prevention, and enforcement.

To better educate yourself with this scam and others, please visit www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/scams or www.antifraudcentre.ca.



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For further information please contact

Cst Tyler BUCHANAN

“F” Div Commercial Crime – Saskatoon Office

(306) 975-5159