

BBB sets record straight regarding misleading/dangerous e-mails

Written by

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Consumers have contacted the Better Business Bureau of Minnesota and North Dakota in regards to e-mailed notifications they have received, informing them that all cell phone numbers will be released to telemarketers within a month. The e-mails tell consumers they must register their cell phone number with the National Do Not Call Registry before a certain deadline or they will be billed for each telemarketing call they receive after the deadline expires. The e-mail also urges the receiver to share the message with all of their friends.

The Better Business Bureau is reminding the public that these notifications are not accurate. On the contrary, it is illegal for telemarketers who use auto-dialers to call wireless cell phone numbers. There is also no deadline to register your cell phone number on the National Do Not Call Registry.

There is a grain of truth in these e-mailed notifications; a national directory of cell phone numbers is being compiled by several national wireless companies. However, cell phone numbers will be included in this directory on an opt-in basis, meaning customers will have to request that their number be included. If they do nothing, their cell phone number will not be included. The other thing to know about this directory is that it will not be published, made available over the internet or sold to telemarketers. It would be made available only to operator service centers performing the 411 directory assistance service.

“The cell phone/Do Not Call Registry deadline is an urban myth which re-surfaces periodically,” says Dana Badgerow, President and CEO of the Better Business Bureau of Minnesota and North Dakota. “While this e-mail chain is fairly benign, in that it doesn’t seem to target consumers’ pocketbooks, it clouds the waters and opens the door for the next misleading e-mail chain, which might seek to defraud customers or use them to unwittingly spread a computer virus.”

Customers who receive these e-mails are urged to ignore or delete them, just in case a virus might be attached. Customers who have questions can contact the Better Business Bureau at 651-699-1111 or obtain a report on a company 24 hours a day at www.thefirstbbb.org

FBI Warns of Fraudulent E-Mails

The FBI is warning to the public to be aware of three new fraudulent e-mails that are currently in circulation. One claims to contain “Intelligence Bulletin No. 267;” another purports to be from the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI Counterterrorism Division; and the third claims to contain an FBI intelligence bulletin from the Weapons of Mass Destruction Directorate.

Consumers who receive these e-mails are advised not to open or click on any links contained in these or similar e-mails; they are hoaxes and may contain viruses or malicious software.

The FBI does not send unsolicited e-mails or e-mail official reports. Consumers should not respond to any unsolicited e-mails claiming to be from the FBI or click on any links embedded in such e-mails.

Below is an example of the fraudulent e-mail message:

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CLASSIFIED

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

Weapons of Mass Destruction Directorate

HANDLING NOTICE: Recipients are reminded that FBI Intelligence Bulletins contain sensitive terrorism and counterterrorism information meant for use primarily within the law enforcement and homeland security communities. Such bulletins shall not be released, either in written or oral form, to the media, the general public, or other personnel who do not have a valid need-to-know without prior approval from an authorized FBI official, as such release could jeopardize national security.

If you have been a victim of Internet crime, please contact your Better Business Bureau or file a complaint at www.IC3.gov.

The mission of the Better Business Bureau is to promote through self-regulation, the highest standards of business ethics and conduct; and to instill public confidence in responsible businesses through programs of education and action that inform, protect and assist the general public. Contact the BBB at www.thefirstbbb.org or 651-699-1111, toll-free at 1-800-646-6222.