



CITY OF PARMA OHIO

LAW DEPARTMENT



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LAW DIRECTOR ADVISORY **SPOOFING CALLER ID**

Recently, we received a complaint from a Parma Heights resident who said that he received a call from 440-885-8183 (City of Parma) and they then proceeded to try to sell him a cruise. Through our investigation, we were made aware of a new scam technique in which spoofing technology is being used to make it appear that phone calls are coming from known, or local phone numbers. Once the caller answers the phone, believing the number to be someone they may know, the scam begins. Scammers and identity thieves are continually coming up with new ways to try to solicit money for personal and private information from individuals. The Law Department does our best to keep up with these new tactics to ensure we can adequately alert and protect our residents. See below for more information on this latest scam tactic.

What is Spoofing?

Spoofing occurs when a scam artist places a phone call using specialized computer software which allows them to change what appears on the caller ID. Thus, instead of showing their number, the caller ID may read for example: MICROSOFT SUPPORT 1-800-555-1212. They may also change it to a local number. For example, if your phone number began with area code 440-885-****, you may receive a phone call from a number displaying those same digits. This is typically an attempt to induce individuals to answer, as people are more likely to answer phone calls from a company or local number they recognize.

Is it Legal?

No, spoofing caller ID's in an effort to scam individuals who answer the phone is a crime. In 2009, the Federal Government passed the United States Truth in Caller ID Act. This act prohibits any person or entity from knowingly altering or manipulating caller ID information with the intent to defraud, cause harm, or wrongfully obtain anything of value.

What Can You Do to Protect Yourself Against Spoofing?

Do not blindly trust the information presented on your caller ID. Also, be sure to never provide or confirm sensitive information over the phone. If the caller is asking for money, do not send money even if the caller ID appears to be from a legitimate service. Should you believe the service may be legitimate, ask for a call back number, and conduct research to ensure it is not a scam prior to sending the funds. If you are being pressured to act immediately, hang up the phone as it is most likely a fraudulent service.

Lastly, should you receive a call which you believe to be a scam, whether the number is spoofed or not, REPORT IT! The FTC provides an online complaint assistant which upon entering information about the scam, will direct you to the proper reporting authority. The assistant can be accessed at: <https://www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov/>.