

## Scam Alert: Is That Your Own Number Calling? Don't Answer It.

Scammers are spoofing your own number, or one very similar to it, in order to trick you into picking up

Your phone rings and – wait – is that your own number? As intriguing as that might be, don't answer it. The person on the other end of the phone is attempting to take advantage. People across the country have been reporting this popular technique that tricks you into picking up your phone. From there the details vary – they may impersonate the IRS, claim to be collecting a debt or pretend to be offering technical support for some unknown issue.

Another tactic that's been used in the past is to spoof similar phone numbers, with the same area code and first three digits as your own number. Scammers know you're more likely to pick up if you think the call is coming from someone nearby. Whatever the scenario, Better Business Bureau offers these tips for dealing with a phone scam:

- Don't trust your caller ID. Unfortunately, it's easy to spoof a local number and scammers have posed as all sorts of officials using these types of numbers.
- Don't answer unfamiliar numbers. Screen your calls and don't answer if you don't recognize the caller. If someone really needs to talk to you, they'll leave a voicemail.
- If you do answer, hang up as soon as you realize what's going on. It's always tempting to get the last word in, but you may end up giving them information they can use later.
- Join the Do Not Call Registry. This cuts down on telemarketing and sales calls, so even though it won't stop scammers, you'll get fewer calls overall and will be able to spot the fraudulent ones more easily. ([DoNotCall.gov](http://DoNotCall.gov))
- Keep an eye on your financial statements. If you think you've been victimized, call the billing company and dispute those fraudulent charges.

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