

Community Safety Message

Mobile phone scams

Scams that come to you on your mobile can be difficult to recognise. They might come from somebody who talks as if they know you; they might come through a 'missed call' from an unknown number that you redial; or they might be upfront about what they are promoting, but have hidden charges. You might be offered free or cheap ring tones, or the chance to win fantastic prizes. When you reply to these messages or calls, you may find yourself disappointed in the product or signed up to a service you don't want or cannot stop. You could be left facing a huge phone bill.

Ring tone scams

Misleading offers for 'free' or cheap ring tones that end up being a subscription or premium rate service. These scams might attract you with an offer for a 'free' or low cost ring tone. What you may not realise is that by accepting the offer, you are actually subscribing to a service that will keep sending you ring tones—and charging you a premium rate for them.

Missed calls & text messages from unknown numbers

Missed call scams start by ringing your phone and hanging up so quickly that you can't answer the call in time. Your phone registers a missed call and you probably won't recognise the number. People will often then call the number back to find out who it is.

Apart from being a nuisance, the missed call can lead to a scam in two ways:

- The number you call back may be redirected to a premium rate service (a number that starts with 190) without your knowledge, which means you will be charged a lot of money per minute.
- The number may tell you that you have won a prize of some sort and give you another number to call to 'claim' your prize, but they may not tell you how much the call will cost. This second number may be a premium rate number, again charging you a lot of money to get your 'prize'. Your prize may be nothing more than a ring tone subscription—which can also be a scam!

Text message scams work by sending you a text message from a number you may not recognise, but the content of the message could sound like it's from a friend. Another common tactic is for a text message to sound like someone flirting with you. Many people reply asking who it is and end up engaging in a lengthy SMS exchange with the scammer. Only later do they find out that they have been charged a high rate both for messages they sent (sometimes there are also charges for messages received as well).

SMS competition & trivia scams

You are encouraged to enter a competition or trivia contest over SMS for a great prize – but misled about your chances or how much it will cost to take part. An SMS competition or SMS trivia scam usually arrives as a text message and may encourage you to enter a competition for a great prize. The message could also invite you to take part in a trivia competition, with a great prize on offer. The scammers make money by charging extremely high rates for the messages you send, and any further messages they send to you. With trivia scams, the first lot of questions will be very easy. This is meant to encourage you to keep playing. However, the last one or two questions that you need to answer to claim your 'prize' could be very difficult or impossible to answer correctly (and may even require you to guess a random number).

If you receive a missed call or text message from an unknown number, the best thing to do is to delete the message or ignore the call.

Information provided by Scamwatch.gov.au



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