West Virginia Executive Branch
Privacy Tip

TECH SUPPORT PHONE SCAMS

"Hello, we are calling from Windows and your computer looks like it is infected.
Our Microsoft Certified Technician can fix it for you."

Sound familiar? Tech support scams are a million-dollar industry and have been around for a while. Every day, people are tricked into spending hundreds of dollars on non-existent computer problems. The scam is straightforward: pretend to be calling from Microsoft, gain remote control of the machine, trick the victim with fake error reports and collect the money.

According to Microsoft's website, "Neither Microsoft nor our partners make unsolicited phone calls (also known as cold calls) to charge you for computer security or software fixes."

Here are some tips from Microsoft (www.microsoft.com):

If someone claiming to be from Microsoft tech support calls you:

- Do not purchase any software or services.
- Ask if there is a fee or subscription associated with the "service." If there is, hang up.
- Never give control of your computer to a third party unless you can confirm that it is a legitimate representative of a computer support team with whom you are already a customer.
- Take the caller's information down and immediately report it to your local authorities.
- Never provide your credit card or financial information to someone claiming to be from Microsoft tech support.

If you think that you might have downloaded malware from a phone tech support scam website or allowed a cybercriminal to access your computer, take these steps:

- Revoke remote access (if unsure, restart your computer). That should cut the remote session and kick them out of your PC.
- Scan your computer for malware. The cybercriminal may have installed password stealers or other Trojans to capture your keystrokes.
- Change all your passwords (Windows password, email, banking, etc.).

If you've received one of these calls, report it!

- Federal Trade Commission https://ftccomplaintassistant.gov
- WV State Attorney General's Office http://www.wvago.gov/publicresource.cfm

If you think your state-owned computer has been hacked – CONTACT WVOT IMMEDIATELY!
1-877-558-9966

Note: Your agency/bureau/department/division may have specific requirements – always check your policies and procedures. If you have questions, contact your Privacy Officer.