



THE FORESIGHT COMPANIES, LLC

Accounting Newsletter

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The Scary Truth about Internet/Phone Scams - By Diane DeClercq

Every month we hear about another cyber-hacking case. The news is unnerving, especially when you consider that 1 out of 3 US citizens will be victim to identity fraud this year. The odds are that one of you reading this will be a victim. What can you do?

Internet Scams

1. Verify that any site you are using to put in credit card or bank account information is secure. The site should have a small lock symbol on the address bar, or at the log in area. This indicates that you are on a secure site.

2. Make sure the site is valid. Check the address bar to make sure you're on the correct site. You may receive emails that look like they are a link to your bank or credit card but they may be bogus and take you to an alternate website.

3. Change passwords regularly. Most banks and credit cards require you to change passwords every 3 months. Please don't pick birthdates, anniversary dates, or your dog's name.

4. Review your bank and credit card statements. Today, most people do not reconcile or look at their statements. Don't just glance at the big ticket items. Generally it is the minor recurring \$9.95 charges you are getting hooked for.

Telephone Scams

1. The Grandparent Scam - Someone calls and states that they are a friend or neighbor of a family member who has been injured or stranded and needs money. Hang up and contact that family member directly. If it was



a fraud, report to police. It may also be someone claiming to be with the police department. Again, hang up and call the police department directly.

2. The Credit Card Company Scam - Someone calls and asks you to give them your credit card and social security numbers to verify who you are and discuss possible fraud activity. Hang up and call your bank or credit card company directly using the number on the back of your card. Ask them directly if there has been any fraud activity.

3. The IRS Scam - Someone calls, allegedly from the IRS, questioning your tax returns or claiming you owe money for back taxes. The IRS never calls you! Their method of contact is always by USPS. A contact phone number will be included on the letter mailed to you.

4. Microsoft Support Scam - Someone calls claiming to be Microsoft Support, McAfee, virus software or email provider. They report that there is a virus problem or spam problem with your computer/email and they need you to allow them to log onto your computer to repair it. Once you let them in, they plant a program to gather your personal password and account information.

Email Scams

1. Bogus Email - There are tons of money-grabbing scams out there. The obvious ones are the emails from the President of a foreign country telling you that you have won a lottery or have a special inheritance in your name to claim.

2. IRS.com - The IRS will never email you for information, and their website is **not IRS.com** but **IRS.gov**.



3. Similarly, beware of emails from Chase.net, bankofamerica.net, and fedex.net. All are bogus websites. These emails request you to click on a link to change your password. You get directed to a website which loads a tracking program that allows them to collect your pass words and account information. Pay attention to email addresses before you click.

4. Microsoft Support scam mentioned in telephone scam come thru as an email.

Remember, in all situations, contact your bank, Credit Card Company and any vendor directly by using a phone numbers or website printed on your card or statement. Ask if there are any problems with your account. Hopefully this has not scared you to death, and if you are a Foresight client and you do change your log-in, don't forget to let me know.

