



Don't Dial "1" to Stop Bogus Calls

From the Office of Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison

It can happen like this:

"Ted" answers his phone. A pre-recorded voice instructs him to press "1" to stop future calls or "2" to speak with a live person. Ted presses "1" because he wants the calls to stop.

"Beth" receives a similar call. She presses "2", intending to tell the caller to stop calling. In both cases, the call immediately disconnects. Neither "Ted" or "Beth" ever speak with a live person.

Pressing one of these numbers may seem harmless, but doing so may lead to an *increase* in calls. Here's why:

Scam artists often use dialing machines to place calls using a number generator. The automated dialer does not know when it dials a number whether or not that specific phone number is active. Answering such a call and then pressing "1" or "2" in response indicates that the number is valid and that someone has picked up the call. The scammer then may call again, knowing there is a good chance the call will be answered, in an effort to commit a financial scam. Or, the scammer may place your number on a list of "live" phone numbers he sells to other scammers.

If you get unwanted calls, the most effective approach is to simply hang up without speaking. Do not press any buttons, which just confirms that your number is active.

Unfortunately, given the ease with which such calls can be placed with modern technology, there is no quick or easy way to end these types of calls. These calls are almost always made by people located outside Minnesota, and often outside the United States. People should report these calls to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), which has the authority to enforce laws regarding

unwanted calls and work with international law enforcement authorities to curb financial scams. You may contact the FTC as follows:

Federal Trade Commission
Consumer Response Center
600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20580
(877) 382-4357
TTY: (866) 653-4261
www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov

For more information about these and other scams, you may contact the Minnesota Attorney General's Office at:

Office of Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison
445 Minnesota Street, Suite 1400
St. Paul, MN 55101
(651) 296-3353 (Twin Cities Calling Area)
(800) 657-3787 (Outside the Twin Cities)
www.ag.state.mn.us

