

Ferring



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In this issue: • Spring Fever • Distraction Theft • Scams, Scams, Scams

Spring is here, but will it feel like Christmas for burglars?



As lockdown restrictions ease, and with anticipation of good weather, people are, naturally, looking forward to getting out and about again. Unfortunately, criminals **WILL** react to changing circumstances and watch out for houses they think are empty or unprotected so it's timely to remember some simple steps to keep your home and possessions safe.



You can make thieves' lives harder by:

- Fitting audible burglar alarms with flashing lights, at the front and back of your property.
- When you're going out, switching on lights or radio, or using simple timers to do so.
- Even if out just for a few minutes, checking that all doors and windows are shut and locked.
- Making sure side and back gates are secure.
- Not leaving garden tools outside, keeping ladders out of sight and ensuring sheds, garages and outbuildings are locked.
- Even when you're at home, trying not to leave accessible windows open at night.
- Fitting automatic (PIR motion sensor) outside security lights.
- If you're going away, asking a neighbour to keep an eye on your home, taking in any deliveries and considering parking on your drive.

And be careful if more than one person calls at your door, they may try to fool you into letting one caller in to rob you while you are distracted by another.

Distraction Theft – Supermarkets: On a similar note, in recent months there has been a marked increase in stories of distraction theft near supermarkets in our area, even in broad daylight. Typically, when a shopper returns to their car, a stranger distracts them by saying there's damage to the car, or a nail in the tyre, or they've dropped something, or asking for help, even sometimes claiming a medical emergency. Meanwhile, an accomplice steals from bags or the car, often including purse or wallet and bank cards. These crooks are devious and cynical - be careful!

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Scams and Nuisance Phone Calls: Apologies for yet another item about scams but UK Finance, the banking and finance industry body, suggests that reported cases of impersonation fraud - including spoof phone and mobile calls – almost doubled last year to 40,000. The real figure is likely to be much higher, because many victims won't report fraud to their bank or building society, or even tell family or friends, because of feelings of embarrassment or guilt. And during the pandemic police have recorded over 6,000 cases of Covid-related fraud alone - Action Fraud report that £34.5m has been stolen in Covid scams since March 2020.

Fraudsters' ingenuity knows no bounds and the types of scams are many and various. Here are 3 scam messages received recently by readers of this Newsletter:



- ◆ *We have limited your PayPal account due to safety concerns. Please visit https://paypal-resolution*****58.com before we are forced to suspend services.*
- ◆ *Monthly billing for your EE plan has failed, to continue using EE services please update your billing information at: ee-billingsecure*****com*
- ◆ *During a recent review, we found an unacceptable level of potential risk associated with your Amazon account: Please log in to your Account [here](#). The security of your account is important to us. You'll regain access once you've provided the information we need.*

The recipients of the PayPal and EE messages don't even have accounts with them!

And this is one reader's recent experience of a nuisance call:

- ◆ *"I had a phone call on my landline telling me that £600 had been taken from my Mastercard account to an address abroad and if I pressed 1 on my phone I would be given further information. I immediately put the phone down, dialled 1471 and got the number 0183****111. I contacted my card company and they confirmed no money had been taken from my account and this was a scam. If I had pressed 1 then it would probably have been connected to an operator who would have tried to get access details for my account. "*

If you receive a doubtful call, **DO NOT PRESS ANY KEY** on your keypad - just hang up. **NEVER CLICK ON LINKS** in emails or texts unless you are sure of the authenticity of the sender.

Here are a few ways to try blocking or minimising cold calls:

- ▶ Register with the Telephone Preference Service (0345 070 0707) – it's free and it allows you to opt out of any unsolicited live telesales calls. This should reduce the number of cold calls you receive but may not block scammers.
- ▶ Talk to your phone provider to see what other privacy services and call-blocking services are available. BT, Sky and TalkTalk all offer effective blocking systems.
- ▶ If you have a smartphone, use the settings on the phone to block unwanted numbers. Similarly, many modern landline handsets have built in call blocking functionality.

If you have doubts about an email you have received, forward it to report@phishing.gov.uk. Suspicious text messages should be forwarded to the number 7726 (free of charge). If you believe you are the victim of a fraud, please report it to Action Fraud as soon as possible by calling 0300 123 2040 or visiting www.actionfraud.police.uk.

UPDATE: Recently, Action Fraud warned of a new National Insurance scam. An automated telephone call claims "Your N.I. number has been compromised". The victim is asked to "Press 1 on your handset to be connected to an agent" to resolve the 'problem'. Once connected, victims are pressured into giving personal details to get a new N.I. number. In sad reality, they're talking to a criminal who can now use their details to commit fraud.



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