

FTC Consumer Alert

Federal Trade Commission ■ Bureau of Consumer Protection ■ Division of Consumer & Business Education

Text Messages from Your Bank? Sounds “Phishy”

The text message that claims to be from your bank warns about a problem with your account, and urges you to call a phone number or visit a website right away. According to the Federal Trade Commission, the nation’s consumer protection agency, it’s very likely another attempt by a crook to steal your personal information.

Many people have gotten wise to “phishing” emails — messages meant to trick recipients into sharing personal information, like bank account numbers and login passwords. But scammers use new tools to play old tricks. And now, they’re hoping to win trust — and get access to personal information — by sending text messages to your personal cell phone.

If you receive a text message about problems with your bank or credit card account, call your wireless provider immediately and let them know about the message. Then, file a complaint with the FTC at ftc.gov or by calling 1-877-FTC-HELP.

If you think your bank or credit card account has been compromised, call your bank or card issuer directly using the number on your statement or on the back of your card. Never give personal information on the phone, in a text, or online unless you know exactly who you’re dealing with.

The FTC works for the consumer to prevent fraudulent, deceptive, and unfair business practices in the marketplace and to provide information to help consumers spot, stop, and avoid them. To file a complaint or to get free information on consumer issues, visit ftc.gov or call toll-free, 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357); TTY: 1-866-653-4261. The FTC enters consumer complaints into the Consumer Sentinel Network, a secure online database and investigative tool used by hundreds of civil and criminal law enforcement agencies in the U.S. and abroad.



October 2009