



News

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BBB's Chicago and Northern Illinois Top Scams of 2017

Rockford, IL – Jan. 4, 2018 – Phishing Scams tops the list of 2017 reports to Chicago and Northern Illinois Better Business Bureau Scam Tracker, knocking out the Tax Collection scam which has topped the list both locally and nationally for the past few years.

Phishing scams have become the doorway for many cyber criminals to launch ransomware and malware attacks on businesses and consumers, and often leads to massive losses in money and valuable data. The BBB advises: never click on links or open attachments from unsolicited emails, and never provide personal information without first verifying the source.

“The more we inform consumers on scam tactics, what to look for and how to avoid them, the better chance we have to stop fraudsters in their **tracks**,” said Dennis Horton, director of the Rockford Regional Office of the Better Business Bureau.

Another scam that lit up Scam Tracker in 2017 was the “**Can You Hear Me**” scam where fraudsters faked having a headset problem in an attempt to get unsuspecting victims to say “**yes**” on a recorded line which could be used as phony proof of purchases in the future.

Rounding out the top three reflects the proliferation of Online Purchase Scams as the number of fake websites continues to rise. Scammers pose as legitimate operations selling fake vacations, high demand merchandise at discount prices, and even fake pets.

“**That’s** why our online Scam Tracker tool is so vital in the work we **do**,” added Horton. “**We** are only as good as the information we receive so **that’s** why **it’s** important for consumers to report any activity they suspect is fraudulent to BBB Scam Tracker, even if they themselves **weren’t** scammed. We consider those who report to be citizen heroes because they are informing others and helping us to do the same. Knowledge is power and **it’s** one of the most powerful tools we have to help put a stop to **scams**.”

Top 10 Scams of 2017:

1. Phishing Emails/Texts – *stealing money and information*
2. Can You Hear Me – *phone scam*
3. Online Purchase – *fake websites*
4. Employment – *job offer scams*
5. Tax Collection – *fake IRS or Treasury Dept. calls/emails*
6. Debt Collections – *invoices, calls or emails for fake debts*
7. Tech Support – *calls, texts or emails from fake tech support agents*
8. Sweepstake/Lottery/Prizes – *fake claims to steal money upfront*
9. Travel/Vacations – *too good to be true offers*
10. Identity Theft – *fraudulent activity using your personal information*

BBB encourages consumers to learn how to recognize scams and to avoid them by following these ten simple steps: bbb.org/avoidscams.

Remember to always report scammers. If you've been the target of a scam or suspect scam activity, report it to authorities and [BBB Scam Tracker](#) to warn others.

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For reliable information, lists of BBB Accredited Businesses by industry, and BBB Business Reviews you can trust on local businesses and charities, visit bbb.org/ask.

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