

Fraud Alerts!

VETERANS SCAM

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is **warning Veterans not to give credit card numbers over the phone to callers claiming to update VA prescription information.** Veterans have become targets in an inexcusable scam that dishonors their service and misrepresents the Department built for them. **VA does not call Veterans and ask them to disclose personal financial information over the phone.**

Scam artists are misrepresenting the VA to gain personal information over the phone. They say VA recently changed procedures for dispensing prescriptions and ask for the Veteran's credit card number. Once the scammer has this information, they either purchase items online or sell the information to other scammers. **The VA has not changed its processes for dispensing prescription medicines,** nor has the VA changed its long-standing commitment to protect the personal information of this nation's Veterans."

Veterans with questions about VA services should contact the nearest VA medical center, connect with a representative by calling toll-free at 1-877-222-8387 or contact a member of the Bucks County Task Force.

HOME ENERGY SCAM ALERT

With billions in stimulus money being released for green energy programs, and millions of Americans eager to help the environment, scammers are trying to cash in. Among their ploys:

- **Tax credits.** Credits up to \$1,500 are available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act for making certain energy-efficient home improvements. However, do not believe claims that any improvement qualifies. For a list of products that do, visit www.energystar.gov/taxcredits.
 - Also, pass on any offer to file the "necessary paperwork" for a fee. "You don't need any assistance to take advantage of the green home improvement tax credits being offered by the federal government," says Alison Southwick of the Better Business Bureau. **And ignore any e-mail message claiming to be from the Department of Energy promising a refund.** Opening its attachment could unleash computer malware or gather your personal information for identity theft.
- **Power companies.** Some local utility companies offer rebate programs for energy-saving measures, so scammers pose as employees offering to do energy audits or make energy-saving repairs. Sometimes, it's a ruse to get into your home; be especially suspicious of pairs of workers, one diverts homeowners while the other steals valuables. The pair may offer to make "needed" renovations on the spot, charging you for the work or collecting a rebate you are entitled to.
- **Gizmos.** Beware of pricey gadgets such as "magnetic power generators" or certain "energy saver" devices. They do not work, say officials, and do not qualify for tax credits. Also, installing them could be against the law because it requires tampering with a power meter.
- **Door-to-door deceit.** Scammers may claim to be contractors, a representative of an "off-grid" utility company or salesperson of energy-efficient home products. What you will get: **high-pressure tactics, false promises and maybe even an attempt to collect personal information.**

To validate legitimate contractors, ignore the "references" offered and contact your state's licensing board, check with the [Better Business Bureau](http://www.bbb.org) or your local Office of Consumer Protection. Remember to always contact your utility company if a self-described employee comes knocking at your door.

BUCKS COUNTY CRIMES AGAINST OLDER ADULTS TASK FORCE ~ www.crimesagainstolderadultsbucks.org

Bucks County District Attorney's Office

215-348-6344

Bucks County Consumer Protection

215-348-6060

Bucks County Register of Wills

215-348-6265

Bucks County Area Agency on Aging

215-348-0510

Network of Victim Assistance

1-800-675-6900

Bucks County Coroner

215-348-3852