

Online Security

A New Twist on a Familiar Scam

Now that many customers are savvy enough not to give out their credit card number and address over the phone, scammers have upped the ante. Here's how it works. Someone may call you claiming to be from the Security and Fraud Department of VISA or any of the major credit cards. They will give you their name and badge number and tell you that your card, issued by the name of your bank, has been flagged for an unusual purchase pattern. They will ask if you made a purchase of a specific product at a specific price, from a marketing firm. When you answer "no," the caller will tell you that they have been watching this company, whose charges are just under the \$500 pattern that flags most cards and that a credit will be issued and sent to you. The caller will read your address and ask if that information is correct. Once you reply "yes," the caller will tell you he or she will begin a Fraud investigation, provide you with a six digit "control number," and direct you to call Security at the 800 number on the back of your credit card if you have more questions.

Now that your trust has been gained, here's where the scam comes in.

The caller will ask you to verify you are in possession of your card by reading seven numbers to him which can be found on the back of your card. The first four are part of your card number, and the last three are the security, or PIN, numbers that verify you are the possessor of the card—the numbers you are sometimes asked to input to make Internet purchases. He will then tell you the numbers are correct and that he needed to verify the card was not lost or stolen. He will ask you if you have any questions, and tell you not to hesitate to call if you do. If you call your credit card company and ask for Security you will find that they did not call you and that, very possibly, a purchase for just less than \$500 has already been made.

Don't give up your PIN!

What the scammers are looking for is the three digit PIN number on the back of your card. Your credit card company would never ask for that information because they already know it. If you receive a similar call, do not give out your information, and report it to your credit card company immediately.