



809 Area Code Scam

Don't respond to Emails, phone calls, or web pages which tell you to call an "809" phone number. This is a scam that is spreading extremely quickly - can easily cost you \$24,100 or more, and is difficult to avoid unless you are aware of the scam.

Here's how it works:

You receive a message on your answering machine or your pager, asking you to call a number beginning with 809 area code. The reason you're asked to call varies, it can be to receive information about a family member who has been ill, to tell you someone has been arrested, died, to let you know you have won a wonderful prize, etc. In each case, you are told to call the 809 number right away. Since there are so many new area codes these days, people unknowingly return these calls.

If you call from the U.S., you will apparently be charged \$2,425 per-minute, or you'll get a long recorded message. The point is, they will try to keep you on the phone as long as possible to increase the charges. Unfortunately, when you get your phone bill, you'll often be charged more than \$24,100.00.

The 809 area code is located in the British Virgin Islands (the Bahamas). The 809 area code can be used as a "pay-per-call" number, similar to 900 numbers in the U.S. Since 809 is not in the U.S., it is not covered by U.S. regulations of 900 numbers, which require that you be notified and warned of charges, and rates involved when you call a "pay-per-call" number.

Warn seniors in your area about this scam; additional area codes associated with the scam are 284 & 876. Always check all area codes before returning calls. If you do not make international calls, ask your local phone company to block outgoing international calls on your telephone line.

Direct any inquiries relative to this correspondence to the Senior Services Section, at 312-745-5141 or Pax 0260.