



Public Service Announcement
Ashland Police Department
www.ashlandpolice.us
Douglas A. Goodman, Chief
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The Ashland Police Department would like to warn all businesses and organizations that have a PBX (Private Branch Exchange) phone system of an international phone scam that is costing organizations millions across the globe.

“Hacking” is usually associated with computer scams and identity fraud. In toll fraud, hackers from across the globe (many cases emanate from Canada and Southeast Asia) gain unauthorized access through the PBX’s maintenance port (via modem) or directly through the voicemail system. Once access is gained, hackers can then enable the organizations phone system to be utilized by unauthorized users to make international phone calls.

Although hackers can gain access to modern PBX systems via the internet through modems, hackers can also gain access directly through the voice system. Be aware of the below suspicious activity (source: ATT Fraud):

- Callers repeatedly dialing in and asking for an invalid extension
- Excessive hang-ups
- Obscene calls
- Wrong numbers
- Caller asking employees what number or party they have reached
- Dead air calls

The end result is expensive, unauthorized calls that in more cases than not, become the financial responsibility of the organization, not the long distance carrier. Prevention is the key. According to the Federal Communications Commission, businesses and organizations should do the following to prevent exposure to this fraud:

- Upon initial set-up of your voicemail system, have all employees change their default password set up by the provider
- Choose a complex voicemail password of at least six digits, making it more difficult to a hacker to detect
- Change your voicemail password frequently
- Don’t use obvious passwords such as an address, birth date, phone number or repeating or successive numbers (i.e. 111111 or 123456)
- Check your greeting regularly to ensure the message is indeed yours. Hackers tend to attack voice mailboxes at the start of weekends or holidays
- Consider blocking international calls
- If possible, consider disabling the remote notification, auto-attendant, call forwarding, and out-paging capabilities of voice mail if these features are not used.
- Check your phone records frequently for unauthorized calls.

Please find more information from the FCC’s website: <http://www.fcc.gov/guides/voice-mail-fraud>
