

# Don't Get Caught In The 'Area Code 809' Scam

HONESDALE (Wayne Co.) — Remember when people were getting outrageous charges for 900 numbers?

This is a new version of that old scam. How can you protect yourself? Don't answer e-mails, phone calls, pagers, or web pages which ask you to call an "809" phone number.

What happens if you call an "809" numbers? You will find a very ugly surprise on your next phone bill. Unsuspecting folks have been charged more than \$24,000. Yes, that \$24,000!

The National Fraud Information Center says this fraud is spreading quickly and costing victims a great deal of money. There can be several variations but all of them operate basically the same.

### How The Scam Works

You receive a message on your answering machine or on your pager, which asks you to call a number beginning with the 809 area code. The reason you're asked to call varies; it can be to

receive information about a family member who is ill, to tell you someone has been arrested or died, or to announce you have won a fabulous prize. Many people unthinkingly return the call.

If you call from the United States, you will be charged as much as \$2,425 per minute. You might get a person who tries to keep you on the phone as long as possible. You might also get a long recorded message. The point is to keep you on the phone to run the charges up. A 10 minute call can show up on your bill as a \$24,00+ charge!

### Why It Works

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 United States.

Since 809 is not in the United States, regulations of 900 numbers require that you be notified and warned of charges and rates involved when you call a "pay-per-call" number.

The company also does not have to provide a time period during which you can end the call without a charge.

While many U.S. phones have 900 number blocking to avoid these types of charges, 900 number blocking will not prevent 809 calls.

### How Can You Protect Yourself?

Do not return any calls to 809 numbers no matter how you get the message.

Be sure all your family and friends know about this scam and do not make calls to 809 numbers.

Remember you might also get these requests to call 809 numbers on Web pages and e-mail.

Prevention is key to fighting this scam. If you become a victim of this scam, is it a nightmare to try to fight the charges. That's because you did actually make the call. If you call your local or long distance phone companies you will probably not get much help.

On Being a Farm Wife (and other hazards)

Joyce Bupp



It's a disease. It is a disease, by gosh. And it's an annual thing, just like the flu. Our favorite retail places all know that, and they're trading on our seasonal weakness.

A practice otherwise known as "marketing." While I'm not normally an impulse buyer or spender of any retail significance, a layout of this merchandise never fails to trip my trigger, knock my resolve, send me to my consumer knees.

Which is the reason that more than a dozen little packs of "marketing" have been added to the inventory of previous accumulations waiting in a large plastic container hibernating at a chilly spot in the basement.

Garden peas and radishes, sunflowers and zinnias, cosmos, morning glories, sweet peas...

My name is Joyce. And I need help.

It's all the doing of those enticing garden merchandise layouts. Seeds. Bulbs. Plants. Potting soil. Gardening gloves, peat pots.

But it's those "10 for \$1" seed packet sales that trigger my complete downfall. Those little packets with just enough seeds to give you a small crop of — not the newest, latest, biggest or most ballyhooed new introductions — but generally long-established, dependable varieties of familiar veggies and flowers.

Why do I even buy or plant radish seed, for instance? Radishes can be had at the supermarket, ready to slice and scatter on a salad, for...less, one area chain was selling three bags of them for a buck, just last week.

Even 10-cent seed packets of them are probably no bargain, when you begin to calculate the time needed to get a spot ready to plant, tuck them in the ground, wait a couple of weeks and then hope the tiny, underground, radish "riddleresworms" haven't tunneled through the

chubby, red roots like microscopic moles.

On the other hand, when an early, warm, sunny afternoon clobbers me with a raging case of seed sickness, a dime-pack of radish seeds is a real cheap antidote. Plus, if you've even tasted a freshly-pulled radish, still cold from the soil in which it grew, you know no prepackaged radish even comes close in crisp, tingly taste.

Which is why there is not one, but three, packs of radish seeds here on inventory.

I need help.

Nor had I planned to plant garden peas. Sugar snaps, maybe, but not shelling peas. With snap peas, you can pick a bowlful and have a bowlful for your effort. After picking and shelling garden peas, you might have a cup of results for your effort. Or two cups with a lot of effort.

So why is there not one, but four packs of garden peas here? Because one pack would only plant a tiny short row somewhere along the edge of the flower bed on some early, enticing planting day. Four packs — those 10-cent jobs — will make the effort more worthwhile. Canned peas are blah. Frozen peas are good. Fresh peas are manna from the gods.

When I yanked off the cover of the storage container to put the latest treasures away until planting season, I came face to face with another batch of "10 for \$1" picked up just a few weeks ago. And forgotten about. Which is why we also now have four packs of flowering sweat pea seeds. Four kinds of sunflowers. Eight packs of zinnias. Several kinds of melons, squash, cucumbers. Single packs of a whole bunch of stuff.

Help! I need help.

Starting about the middle of April would be a good time. Bring your own garden tools.

I'll supply the seeds.

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