

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Friday, Feb. 7, 2020

Attorney General Nessel Warns Consumers of Deceptive “Bank Fraud” Alerts

LANSING – Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel today warned Michigan residents to watch out for fraudulent bank alerts following an uptick in increasingly sophisticated scams.

The deceitful scam usually starts with a phone text – coming from their bank – alerting the receiver to what appears to be the fraudulent use of a his or her debit card. The alert appears to be real; for example:

“FREE TEXT from Fifth Third Bank #2579 To continue using your card, please verify this transaction: 02/05 – Gucci Merchant \$1632.00. Press Y for Yes or N for No.”

The text or email alert is then followed by a phone call – which appears to be coming from the bank’s 1-800 customer service number. When quizzed about whether the call is real, the caller even says: “Check on the back of your card and you will see that I am calling from the customer service number listed there.” That, in fact, is true because they have “spoofed” the customer service number, making it appear as if that is the number from which they are calling.

The caller is very professional, commits to ensuring the fraudulent charges are dropped, then begins to ask questions that eventually lead to an attempt to confirm the cardholder’s PIN number.

In another instance, the text message is a “ChaseBank notice” warning that “your debit card is temporary locked” (misspelling temporarily), with instruction to call a stated number “for support.”

“Do NOT fall for these scams,” said Nessel. “These criminals are increasingly clever and conniving and have found yet another way to cheat honest Michigan residents out of their hard-earned money.”

Nessel urges every Michigan resident who gets an email, text or call that is supposedly from their bank to hang up and call the customer service number on the back of their debit card. That is the only way to ensure the caller is who they claim to be.

In at least some cases, email fraud alerts are easier to spot because the sender’s email address doesn’t match up with the bank’s address. Most customers, however, do not take the time to verify the sender’s address.

“The bottom line is this: Don’t give a single piece of personal information – your birth date, the last four digits of your Social Security number, your PIN number – to anyone who calls,” Nessel said. “Hang up and call back on a number you know you can verify.”

For more information please read the following Consumer Alerts:

- Caller ID Spoofing
- Text Message Scams: Smishing
- Hijacking Your Text, Email, and Instant Messages: A New Angle on "Phishing" Scams

Consumers are encouraged to file consumer complaints online with the Michigan Department of Attorney General or call 877-765-8388.