

Unfortunately, we live in a society that consists of those that thrive by preying on unsuspecting victims. The best way to avoid becoming a victim is to stay informed. UCF is not exempt as a target of unscrupulous companies or individuals that investigate phone numbers and monitor internet buying practices. They hope to find victims who will unwittingly acknowledge their attempts to sell bogus, damaged or discontinued products at exorbitant prices. The most common commodities are advertising, copier toner, office supplies, printer cartridges and chemicals but scams can involve any commodity or service that exists.

Fortunately, there are ways to protect yourself and the University from being scammed:

- Allow only designated department personnel to place orders Never give your purchasing card number over the phone or in e-mail unless you have initiated the call/e-mail.
- Don't give information about your office equipment over the telephone or via e-mail to unfamiliar suppliers.
- Refuse all items that you have not ordered.
- Do not authorize payment for transactions unless you are sure they are legitimate.
- Do not give out personal information over the phone or in e-mail unless you have initiating the contact.

Most scams use common techniques to trap their victims. Company names and scenarios may change, but the tactics used to accomplish their goals are, typically, not unique. If a telephone or e-mail solicitor contacts you offering a "special sale", it could be a supplier scam. If an unknown solicitor calls to ask for your shipping address, it could be a supplier scam. If you receive goods that were not ordered, it could be a supplier scam.

Here are some typical techniques used in telephone scams:

- Scammers typically speak very fast to catch you off guard.
- They often don't tell you that they are selling something, just that they are going to save you money.
- Scammers won't give their full names or provide telephone numbers.
- The company's name is similar to your supplier's name.
- They won't send you a quotation or anything in writing.
- Scammers may ask for your Social Security number or credit card number so you can qualify or to identify your purchase.
- Scammers can only offer the savings if you purchase on-the-spot.
- The "exceptional offer" will expire in a very short time period - sometimes within hours or minutes.

Some commonly used sales pitches of scammers are as follows:

- "We need your address so we can ship the items you ordered."
- "We're raising prices and have several cartons at the old price."
- "We're selling discontinued items at close-out prices."
- "We have free items or gifts for ordering."
- "You must order today to take advantage of the price."
- "The price increase has just been announced but if you order now, you can avoid it."
- "Our company's anniversary gift to our customers is ready to ship to you. What is your size, or what color do you want?"

If you suspect you have been contacted by a supplier scam, advise the caller that it would be best to let the Purchasing Office speak to them. In most cases, the caller will hang up before you can even dial the number to transfer them. If you are a victim of one of these scams, document as much of the situation as possible and forward the scam information to the Purchasing Office.

Please contact the Purchasing Office at 823-2661 if you have any questions or concerns about whether a call or an e-mail you receive may be a scam.