

***72 Phone Scam**

*72, billing back to you: You receive a call from a stranger posing as a telephone technician or telling you that he has been arrested for driving with a suspended license and is in jail — or is in a situation that requires your immediate help. "I need to reach my wife and tell her what happened so she can pick up our two kids. Would you dial *72 and then her number?"

*72 is a custom feature for call forwarding. When the customer dials *72 followed by a telephone number, it activates the call forwarding feature causing all your incoming calls to ring at another number. At the end of the other line — whether calls have been forwarded to a landline, a cell phone or a payphone — the original caller's partner-in-crime is able to accept all collect and third-party calls, while telling your own legitimate callers that they have the wrong number. You get billed for all calls made because your number is the one from which they are forwarded. This ingenious scam, which even overrides cell phones inability to get collect calls, may go on for several days before you become aware it has occurred.

As AT&T explains the scam:

Star-7-2, billing back to you: You receive a call from a stranger posing as a telephone technician or telling you that he has been arrested for driving with a suspended license and is in jail — or is in a situation that requires your immediate help. "I need to reach my wife and tell her what happened so she can pick up our two kids. Would you dial *72 and then her number?"

Star-7-2 is a custom feature for call forwarding. When the customer dials *72 followed by a telephone number, it activates the call forwarding feature causing all your incoming calls to ring at another number. At the end of the other line — whether calls have been forwarded to a landline, a cell phone or a payphone — the original caller's partner-in-crime is able to accept all collect and third-party calls, while telling your own legitimate callers that they have the wrong number. You get billed for all calls made because your number is the one from which they are forwarded. This ingenious scam, which even overrides cell phones inability to get collect calls, may go on for several days before you become aware it has occurred.

(Of course, this scheme only works if the victim had previously signed up for the call-forwarding option with his phone service provider. And although *72 is the sequence most commonly used for call forwarding, some phone service providers may use different sequences.)

A representative from U. S. Cellular instructed any victim of the *72 scam to dial *720 and press send. This command cancels the call-forwarding feature. The perpetrator of this particular incident committed this fraud on a number of people in order to make tracing their calls difficult.

Please be cautious of any phone number that begins with a *, #, 0, or 900 series number. These prefixes, when used for fraud, may allow access to user's account which can incur significant toll charges.

Source: AT&T Security Alerts