

Robocallers posing as FCC staff blocked after robocalling real FCC staff

Robocallers posing as employees of the Federal Communications Commission made the mistake of trying to scam real employees of the FCC, the FCC announced yesterday. “On the night of February 6, 2024, and continuing into the morning of February 7, 2024, over a dozen FCC staff and some of their family members reported receiving calls on their personal and work telephone numbers,” the FCC said.

The calls used an artificial voice that said, “Hello [first name of recipient] you are receiving an automated call from the Federal Communications Commission notifying you the Fraud Prevention Team would like to speak with you. If you are available to speak now please press one. If you prefer to schedule a call back please press two.”

You may not be surprised to learn that the FCC does not have any “Fraud Prevention Team” like the one mentioned in the robocalls, and especially not one that demands Google gift cards in lieu of jail time.

“The FCC’s Enforcement Bureau believes the purpose of the calls was to threaten, intimidate, and defraud,” the agency said. “One recipient of an imposter call reported that they were ultimately connected to someone who ‘demand[ed] that [they] pay the FCC \$1,000 in Google gift cards to avoid jail time for [their] crimes against the state.’”

The FCC said it does not “publish or otherwise share staff personal phone numbers” and that it “remains unclear how these

individuals were targeted.” Obviously, robocallers posing as FCC employees probably wouldn’t intentionally place scam calls to real FCC employees. But FCC employees are just as likely to get robocalls as anyone else. This set of schemers apparently only made about 1,800 calls before their calling accounts were terminated.

The FCC described the scheme yesterday when it announced a proposed fine of \$4,492,500 against Telnyx, the voice service provider accused of carrying the robocalls. The FCC alleges that Telnyx violated “Know Your Customer (KYC)” rules by providing access to calling services without verifying the customers’ identities. When contacted by Ars today, Telnyx denied the FCC’s allegations and said it will contest the proposed fine.

<https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2025/02/robocallers-posing-as-fcc-staff-blocked-after-robocalling-real-fcc-staff/>