The FTC warns of robot calling spam targeting Chinese speakers

The Federal Trade Commission warned this week that mobile spam calls are now targeting the Chinese community in the US, with the robocaller pretending to be from the Chinese Embassy. The messages range from asking the recipient to pick up a package or document from a Chinese Consulate office and offering to exchange yuan to dollars, to the Embassy investigating a fraud and requiring personal information to avoid deportation.

The FTC believes these calls are targeting Chinese immigrants or callers with Chinese last names, but in recent weeks, the practice has reached numbers across the US regardless of who the number is registered to. Like other spam calls, the incoming number appear to be similar to the recipient's own phone number, or spoofs the Chinese Embassy's real phone number which begins with (212) 244. In addition to calls, the FTC warns that similar scams may also be targeting users via WeChat.

In New York, victims have lost $2.5 million since December 2017

According to the New York Police Department, 21 Chinese immigrants have been scammed out of $2.5 million since December 21, 2017. Seniors make up the majority of the victims, and individual losses range between $1,800 to $1.4 million. Similar scams targeting Chinese immigrants have also hit other countries, including Canada, New Zealand, and Australia.

US carriers and phone makers have been working to identify and

automatically block spam callers, but if you want to take additional steps to eradicate these annoying calls, here’s a guide to permanently block them from reaching you. But in general, even if some are still getting through, always remember to never share personal information such as full credit card numbers, passwords, bank information, or Social Security numbers, over the phone.

https://www.theverge.com/2018/4/22/17267970/ftc-robot-scam-call-fraud-chinese-embassy-consulate-212-244