FTC Will Not Ask for Access to Your Computer

Scammers pretending to be from the Federal Trade Commission are calling people to ask them for remote access to their computers in a recent tech-support scam.

How does this scam work?
Scammers are reportedly calling people pretending to be from the Federal Trade Commission or the FTC refund administrators. Some are specifically claiming to be calling about the FTC's Advanced Tech Support refund program. They are asking for remote access to the call recipient's computer with the goal of making the victim believe all they have to do is give the caller remote access in order to receive money that is owed to the recipient.

These kind of scams are called tech-support scams, which involve an imposter pretending to be someone who is helping the victim by obtaining access to his or her computer. Sometimes tech-scammers try to steal personal information for fraud and identity theft, and sometimes they install or trick the victim into installing malware or ransomware on the computer.

How do I protect myself?
The FTC and its refund administrators never ask for remote access to your computer or ask you to pay anything to receive a refund. Any caller who claims to be from the FTC and asks for these things is a scammer. If you get a call like this, hang up immediately, report it to the FTC and spread the word to others so they might be able to avoid getting scammed, too.

In the specific case of the FTC's Advanced Tech Support refund program, checks already have been mailed to those affected, and the FTC is no longer taking new claims.

What if I'm a victim?
Always report all scams and fraud to your local law enforcement agency's non-emergency number. If you believe someone is in danger, call 911. Report all scams and financial abuse to the state attorney general, and file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission at ftc.gov/complaint.