Scammers Can Spoof Local Phone Numbers

Do not automatically trust the person on the other end of the phone line just because they called from a local number. Scammers can “spoof,” or fake, the phone numbers from which they call.

How does this scam work?
Scammers now have the capability to make it look like they’re calling from any phone number, and can make it look familiar and local, even when calling from far away.
Sometimes it just looks like a random local number, other times the number calling almost matches your own and sometimes it can even appear to be someone you know calling, with the name of the person or the business on the caller ID.
Most often when someone lets a spoofed call go to voicemail and tries to call the number back, the person who answers is not the person who called.
If you do answer a spoofed call, you’re likely to be targeted as a victim of an imposter scam, which is when a scammer claims to be someone else and tries to get money or information out of the victim.

How do I protect myself?
If you see a number you don’t recognize on the caller ID, especially if it’s almost exactly the same as yours, letting it go to voicemail is one option.
If you do pick up and don’t recognize the caller, hang up.
Most phone providers offer call blocking services, including mobile apps, built-in features on your phone, cloud-based services and call-blocking devices.
You can register your number with the national Do Not Call Registry at donotcall.gov, but remember it only blocks unwanted sales calls from legitimate companies. However, it may make it easier for you to spot scam calls.

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

Seniors vs. Crime Offices
8035 E. County Road 466, Suite C, at the Sumter County Villages Annex. Hours: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. 352-689-4600, ext. 4606
2722 Brownwood Blvd. Hours: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays. 352-750-1914
8230 SE 165th Mulberry Lane. Hours: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays. 352-753-7775
3000 Moyer Loop. Hours: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesdays. 352-674-1882