

Caribbean Phone Scam Could Cost you \$25 Per Minute

An inquiry was received on a voicemail requesting a return call to the (473) area code that is most likely an example of a known pay-per-call telecommunications scam. The “473” scam has many permutations but they all involve a message (either by email, voicemail or pager) that you immediately call (or fax) a number in the “473” area code or some other area code in the Caribbean. Examples of why you should call or fax the phone number include avoiding litigation, receiving information about someone who has been arrested or died, winning a wonderful prize, or getting a job.

The “473” area code is in the Caribbean, yet most people are not aware that they are making an international call when they dial the “473” area code, since you simply dial 1-473-xxx-xxxx to place the call. No international access codes are required.

The problem comes from the fact that some phone numbers in the “473” area code are “pay-per-call” numbers (like area code (900) numbers in the US), but in the Caribbean there are no legal requirements that callers be informed that they are being charged extra. When you return one of these “pay-per-call” 473 calls, the scammers try to keep you on the phone as long as possible, and you may be charged very high rates for the call, reportedly up to \$25 per minute.

It is difficult to get credit for these charges if you do get scammed since you did make the call, and resolving the problem involves getting credit from international phone companies.

Since there are now many area codes in the Caribbean, this scam is not confined to just the 473 area code. Listed below are some other area codes in the Caribbean. One good rule of protection is: If you don't recognize a number do not respond.

Area codes in the Caribbean:

Anguilla	264	Grenada	473
Antigua	268	Grenadines	784
Bahamas	242	Jamaica	876
Barbados	246	Montserrat	664
Barbuda	268	Nevis	869
Bermuda	441	Puerto Rico	787, 939
Brit. Virgin Islands	284	St. Kitts	869
Caicos Islands	649	St. Lucia	758
Carriacou	473	St. Vincent	784
Cayman Islands	345	Trinidad & Tobago	868
Dominica	767	Turks Island	649
Dominican Republic	809	US Virgin Islands	340