



MARYLAND COMMISSIONER OF FINANCIAL REGULATION CONSUMER ADVISORY



February 19, 2025

Scam Alert: Fake Mortgage Lenders Targeting Homeowners

Beware of suspicious phone calls from fraudsters posing as your mortgage lender. The Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) recently issued a [public notice](#) regarding a new scam targeting homeowners nationwide. The FCC reports that this scam has resulted in significant financial losses for victims, with hundreds of thousands of dollars stolen to date. Beyond the financial loss, many homeowners have experienced or are at risk of experiencing foreclosure.

This advisory provides details about the scam, the tactics employed by fraudsters, and steps you can take to safeguard yourself against fraud.

“Green Mirage” Scam and Fraudulent Techniques

The FCC has identified a scam called “Green Mirage,” which involves illegal [spoofing](#). Scammers impersonate homeowners’ mortgage lenders, calling them to solicit payments. Often, these homeowners have previously sought relief from their legitimate lenders and are expecting contact, making the scam more convincing. The fraudsters typically possess specific details about the homeowner, such as their name, address, and name of their mortgage lender. Using spoofed caller ID numbers, the scammers make it appear as though the call is coming from the homeowner’s real mortgage lender, claiming to represent the “Mortgage Lending Department” or the “Loss Mitigation Department.” This deception convinces many homeowners that the call is legitimate. Many victims only realize they have been scammed when their legitimate mortgage lender begins foreclosure proceedings due to unpaid bills.

How the Scam Works:

- Fraudsters spoof the caller ID number of legitimate mortgage lenders and pose as representatives of the lenders.
- They threaten foreclosure but then offer a loan modification or some other relief if homeowners make specified payments.
- They persuade the homeowner to pay in a manner different than their usual mortgage payment method, such as by mailing money orders to third-party “attorneys” and representatives or by uploading funds to Walmart Green Dot Money Card accounts.
- Victims unknowingly send payments to the fraudsters instead of their actual lender.

How to Protect Yourself:

1. Verify the Caller's Identity:

- If you receive a call regarding your mortgage, do not provide any personal or financial information over the phone.
- Hang up and contact your mortgage lender directly using the official phone number listed on your monthly mortgage statement or lender's website.

2. Be Suspicious of Unsolicited Calls:

- Legitimate lenders typically communicate via official statements, secure portals, or mail—not by making unsolicited phone calls demanding payment.

3. Only Send Payments to Address Listed on your Mortgage Statement

- Scammers manipulate homeowners into sending payments to an unfamiliar person, company, or address instead of the usual one. To protect yourself, ensure all payments are made using your regular method or sent only to the address provided on your monthly statement.

4. Monitor Your Mortgage Account:

- Regularly check your mortgage statements and payment history to ensure all payments have been properly credited.

5. Don't Be Pressured:

- Fraudsters often use scare tactics or urgency to push you into acting quickly. Take your time to verify any payment requests.

Contact

It is important that you report instances of suspected fraud. If you believe you have been targeted or scammed:

- **Contact Your Lender Immediately:** Inform your lender about the incident and verify your payment status.
- **Notify Your Financial Institution:** Contact your financial institution which holds the account where funds may have been withdrawn.
- **File a Complaint:** Report the scam to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at www.ftc.gov/complaints and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) at www.fcc.gov/complaints.
- **Notify Law Enforcement:** Report the incident to your local police department and file police report.
- If you are an elderly victim or assisting an elderly victim, Department of Justice's National Elder Fraud Hotline 1-833-FRAUD-11 or 1-833-372-8311.
- If you have a complaint about your mortgage company, contact the Office of Financial Regulation by calling 410-230-6077 or emailing CSU.Complaints@maryland.gov. You may also submit a complaint [online](#).

The Office of Financial Regulation, a division of the Maryland Department of Labor, is Maryland's consumer financial protection agency and financial services regulator. For more information, please visit our website at www.labor.maryland.gov/finance.



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