

How to Tell Scammers to Take a Hike This Holiday Season

Research shows the holidays are a particularly ripe time for phone scams. T-Mobile's free Scam Shield app can help protect you this season.

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In October, **a hiker** was late returning to his car in the Colorado Rockies. Fearing he was lost, search and rescue tried calling him... repeatedly. And after multiple unanswered calls, teams were deployed across the mountain to seek out and save the lost hiker.

Except he wasn't lost. And he had cell reception the whole time.

In fact, he got search and rescue's calls. He just didn't pick up because he didn't recognize the unknown caller's number.

And, as it turns out, he's not alone in his thinking.

A recent survey by T-Mobile partner **First Orion** – which specializes in network solutions to create call transparency – showed that 9 out of 10 folks say they don't feel comfortable answering their phone when the caller is someone they don't recognize. And 78% said they have missed at least one important call for this reason in the past month.

During the holidays, we expect important deliveries, organize parties and look forward to calls from friends and family filled with seasonal well wishes, but we are also screening calls in fear of scams and robocalls. In fact, 68% of those surveyed reported missing a legitimate call regarding an order or delivery because they didn't recognize the number calling.

And it's with good reason. Scammers love the holidays. The last six weeks of the year are the busiest time for scams and unwanted robocalls. During this holiday season, it is projected that Americans will receive over 27 billion scam calls, resulting in a potential 21 million scam victims and over \$10 billion in losses.

First Orion's holiday scam report showed 57% of consumers say they receive more scam calls during the holiday season. Last year, there was a 53% increase in scam calls from the holiday season compared to the end of September.

Thankfully, if you have T-Mobile or Metro by T-Mobile, there's a better way to get through the season of scammers. T-Mobile has network level protection built-in to give you the information you really need to decide whether to answer a call. With Scam Block and Caller ID working together, you can rest easy knowing you will never miss the calls you want and can ignore the ones you don't want (or never even see them at all!). This holiday season, give yourself the gift of peace of mind by making the most use of a feature you might not even realize you have: The free Scam Shield app, which is part of the **comprehensive set of protections** offered to T-Mobile and Metro by T-Mobile customers against the pervasive problem of scams and robocalls.

With these calls already at an all-time high, clocking in at over 127 million scam calls every workday, it's more important than ever to make use of the holiday-saving app that is available to download right now.

What's Included with the Gift of Scam Shield?

T-Mobile automatically warns every customer if a call is "Scam Likely" to keep you better informed – no action is required to get this benefit. And you can turn on Scam Block from your T-Mobile phone simply by dialing #662#. And T-Mobile is the only major wireless provider to give all their customers free Caller ID, so you know who is calling, even if they aren't in your Contacts. And at T-Mobile you also get a verified check mark displayed when the call has been authenticated by **STIR/SHAKEN** so you know the number on the display has not been spoofed by a scammer!

T-Mobile postpaid and Metro by T-Mobile customers can download the **Scam Shield** app on the **App Store** or **Google Play** and have a dashboard at their fingertips for all the Scam Shield tools. Once the app is downloaded you can enable Scam Block (and stop those "Scam Likely" calls at the network, before they even ring) and have access to turn on Caller ID so you always know who is calling, even if they are not in your contacts!

This surge of scam calls doesn't end until after December 23, according to T-Mobile research. (Looks like scammers like to take time off and celebrate the holidays too!) Internal data shows that 91% of T-Mobile customers who use scam protections report a noticeable positive effect, so just imagine the peace of mind you can experience if you download the Scam Shield app today and get the full spectrum of protections ahead of scammers' favorite time of the year!

Oh, as for that hiker? In the end, everything turned out okay, and after more than a day of being lost amidst alpenes, he found his way back to safety – but not without a stern warning from the rescue agency itself:

“If you’re overdue according to your itinerary, and you start getting repeated calls from an unknown number, please answer the phone; it may be a search and rescue team trying to confirm you’re safe!”

Perhaps the best testimonial yet for taking two minutes to protect yourself, no matter where you are, and download the Scam Shield app.

Survey data from First Orion 2021

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