



Cold calling computer virus scams

The set-up

Someone rings you out of the blue to tell you your computer has a virus.

The hook

They direct you to look at your computer and apparently there is a virus, you download a piece of software and sign up to a computer service contract.

The sting

There is no virus, your computer may have been hacked, you've lost your money.

What a computer virus scam looks like

You are called at home, out of the blue, and told that your computer has a virus. The caller instructs you to log on to your computer and download software that gives them remote access to your PC. You are helpfully 'shown' where the virus is on your computer. The caller then offers to sell you a six or twelve-month computer service contract and takes your credit card details over the phone. Unfortunately there never was a virus. What's more you've just given the scammers access to your computer and they may have downloaded spyware, farmed your email address lists or even stolen your bank details. The service contract provides you little in the way of computer virus protection. And you may find it difficult to get out of.

Variations on computer virus scams

Windows Technical Services scam

The main variations of this scam involve the caller hiding behind different business names. They may tell you they are calling from Windows Technical Services, PC Windows Support, Virtual PC Doctor or possibly even from Microsoft or your Internet Service Provider (ISP). It doesn't matter who they say they are calling from as these organisations are just fronts or even just official sounding names. If someone calls you out of the blue to say your computer has a virus, it's a scam.

Protect yourself from computer virus scams

- If someone calls you out of the blue to say your computer has a virus, just hang up.
- If you have downloaded any software onto your computer as a result of this scam then you should unplug it from the internet immediately. Run spyware and antivirus programmes and, if in doubt, take your computer to a technician to be 'cleaned'. [Click here](#) to find out more about protecting your computer.
- If you have signed up to a service contract and you believe it to be a scam contact your bank or credit-card provider immediately.
- Don't be intimidated by the callers who can become very aggressive, don't try and get any details from them, just hang up.
- Make sure you always know who you are giving your credit card details to.

Help protect others from computer virus scams

If you have encountered the cold-calling computer virus scam please share your story with us. You can report a scam confidentially through our scam report form or add your story to our Facebook page by using the links below

[Report a scam.](#)

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