

Toner Pirates:

How to Avoid A Scam & What to Do if You're a Victim



What are toner pirates?

Toner pirates, also called toner phoners, are fraudulent companies that misrepresent themselves in order to attempt to sell supplies at outrageously inflated prices. A growing number of Atlanta based companies have been taken advantage of by these fake toner phone calls. These "toner pirates" call pretending to be your regular supplier offering to ship replacement toner for your machine then send a bulk shipment with a large price-tag. They may call several times in order to collect information to sound more legitimate on future calls.



How can I avoid becoming a victim?

Here are a few toner pirate facts and tips on how to protect your company:

- Have a specific individual(s) responsible for ordering supplies. It's easier for them to take advantage of you if no one person is responsible and they can collect bits of information from different people.
- If someone contacts your company using general terms claiming to be your "copier company" or "copier service company" ask for a callback number- the caller usually hangs up.
- Beware of callers that avoid giving their firm's name. Never place a supply order over the phone if you are unable to identify the organization.
- Ask the caller to verify your account number, equipment ID number, make and model, and as much information as possible. Your real copier company will be able to provide any of your information but toner pirates will only be able to provide what they've been able to glean from calling your office.
- Advise all employees of the name and contact information for your current supplier to avoid being scammed.
- Never give out information about your equipment such as serial numbers or machine type to telemarketers.
- Do not pay invoices unless they match your current contract.



What do I do if I already ordered supplies from a toner pirate?

If an individual in your office accidentally placed an order with a toner pirate make every attempt to refuse the acceptance upon delivery. If the package gets received, ship the package back to the sender. Here are several further options to report the fraud, pursue further action, and help stop these scamming companies.

1.) Send a letter of rejection to the fraudulent telemarketer via certified mail, and send a copy of it along with a copy of the invoice to the BTA (Business Technology Association), the State of Georgia Attorney General, and the Office of the Attorney General in the fraudulent telemarketer's state:

Business Technology Association
 (Will also forward a copy of your complaint to the Federal Trade Commission)
 12411 Wornall Road
 Suite 200
 Kansas City, MO 64145
 Fax: 312-559-1172

Office of the Attorney General of Georgia
 40 Capitol Square, SW
 Atlanta, GA 30334
 Phone: 404-656-3300
 Fax: 404-657-8733

2.) Send a written, documented complaint along with a copy of the invoice to:

BTA Staff Attorney
 222 S. Riverside Plaza
 Ste. 2100
 Chicago, IL 60606

Ms. Elena Paoli
 Bureau of Consumer Protection
 Federal Trade Commission
 601 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
 Washington, D.C. 20580

3.) If you are a Business Technology Association member, contact BTA for more information:

BTA Member Services
 12411 Wornall Road
 Kansas City, MO 64145
 Phone: 816-941-3100
 Fax: 816-941-4838

Legal hotline: 800-869-6688



4.) Contact National Fraud Information Center

Phone: 800-876-7060

5.) Contact Better Business Bureau

Atlanta phone: 404-766-0875

They recommend filing complaints online at www.bbb.org



6.) Contact Telemarketing Fraud Dept. of Attorney General's Office

2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive SE

Ste. 356

Atlanta, GA 30334

800-869-1123

7.) Go online for more help:

Visit Federal Trade Commission's Consumer Gateway at www.consumer.gov

Visit Imaging Supplies Coalition website at www.isc-inc.org

Visit Call for Action website www.callforaction.org/about

