



**For Immediate Release  
February 28, 2007**

**District Attorney Nola Tedesco Foulston is alerting consumers to a fraudulent e-mail that notifies individuals that their online banking is blocked. These e-mails are not valid and consumers should not open or respond to these e-mails.**

The District Attorney's Office has become aware of a fraudulent e-mail that has recently been circulating. It is purportedly from "BankAmerica Higher Standards."

The e-mail alerts the reader that their on-line banking account has been "blocked." The e-mail further states that upon the bank's review of the reader's bank account, it is suspected "that your Bank of America account may have been accessed by an unauthorized third party." The e-mail then directs the reader to a web link to purportedly help them restore their account access. When the consumer "clicks" on the link, it takes them to a web site where they are asked to re-enter their On-Line ID and Password Code for their account.

**THIS IS NOT A VALID E-MAIL.** This is a scam to get you to part with important personal banking information.

This tactic is used by criminals and is called "phishing." This is because the tactic is similar to a fisherman casting bait into a pond hoping to deceive and catch a fish. Criminals are hoping local consumers will "take the bait" and provide the information so the criminals can access the bank account or fraudulently use the credit card of the unsuspecting consumer. **Legitimate financial institutions do not solicit customer account or credit card information from their customers.**

In the event you receive such a solicitation, **do not provide the information.** If you receive a request for information you believe may be legitimate, contact your financial institution before filling out forms or providing information. Often the financial institutions that are the subject of such attacks have warnings posted on their websites outlining the known scams and providing details about the various techniques.

In order to protect yourself from unwanted e-mail fraud ("phishing") such as this and to ensure the security of your personal information, REMEMBER THE BASIC DO'S AND DON'TS:

- 1) DO: REPORT the e-mail if it looks suspicious. Suspicious e-mails may look like they come from legitimate businesses but many times contain requests for personal information, make urgent appeals and/or have typing errors and/or mistakes in the text;
- 2) DON'T "click" on any link(s) that may be provided in the e-mail;
- 3) DON'T provide any sensitive/personal information;
- 4) DO contact YOUR bank to find out if they have seen any type of unwanted activity with your account;
- 5) DO get on YOUR bank's official website, find out the number for its Fraud and/or Security Department and speak with them regarding the validity of the e-mail(s) received. Additionally, forward a copy of your e-mail to the banking institution;
- 6) DO delete the e-mails.

In the event you provided sensitive information before you realized the e-mail was phony, we suggest you take the following steps:

- 1) Contact YOUR bank, alert them on what occurred and request help on securing your accounts/money;
- 2) Contact the three main Credit Bureaus and place fraud alerts on you account(s) to safeguard against any future fraudulent credit activity;
- 3) Report the incident to the local law enforcement agency and obtain the incident number assigned to your call;
- 4) Maintain a file of all future incidents regarding your personal information that may arise from this incident. Keep records of all names, addresses, phone numbers of the people with which you speak, keep records of the times you spoke with them and a summation of the conversation(s). All this information may be important, if action is required by you later.

**For additional information on protecting yourself from these crimes, contact the Consumer Fraud and Economic Crimes Division of the District Attorney's Office at 660-3600 or go to the District Attorney's website at <http://sedgwickcounty.org/da> for helpful links.**

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