

# LOCAL RESIDENT WARNS OF NEW PHONE SCAM

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A Georgetown woman is urging local residents to be cautious after receiving a suspicious phone call about her social insurance number. Gale Verhaegen said a message was left on her voice mail with a recording that alleged her social insurance number was being suspended because it had been used for money laundering and obtaining fake loans. The message urged her to press one or call back a number with a 782 area code.

"I didn't answer the phone because I didn't know the number," she said.

Verhaegen didn't return the phone call and went on to research the matter on



Torstar file photo

Police advise that when in doubt about a phone call, simply hang up.

line, where she discovered it's a scam that also hit the Hamilton area late last year.

"Don't call back - don't press one," states a warning issued by Hamilton police. "The easiest way of combating this crime is by not falling victim to it. When in doubt, just hang up."

Halton police media relations officer Const. Ryan

Anderson said local residents can report such calls to Halton's Fraud Intake Unit, comprised of a team of 12 investigators, at 905-465-8741.

"Our residents, like people across the country, are dealing with these sorts of scams," he noted.

According to Halton police, your social insurance number is one piece of personal information that can help scammers steal your identity and use it to commit fraud, impersonation and other crimes.

They say those who've fallen victim to identity theft should:

- Immediately cancel any cards that may have been compromised;
- Complete Ontario's new standard identity theft statement and send it to your credit issuers and financial institutions;
- Contact Canada's two national credit reporting agencies, Trans Canada Union and Equifax Canada;
- Report the incident to police.

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