

Not funny or sexy:

Obscene calls are a real nuisance



Dial M for nuisance

Looks like an ordinary phone, doesn't it? Well, it is. But hey, a phone can be a dangerous psychological weapon in the hands of a person given to obscene phone

calls. But there are ways to have people punished who engage in this sort of odious activity.

How many of you have ever had an annoying or offensive call?

Let's face it, most of us have. For women, it might be an ex-boyfriend who insists upon reading his home-spun poetry. This is really something to hang up on.

While a man will get a very annoying call from some drunken oaf who insists he knows you. "How ya doing pal?"

If you get annoying or offensive phone calls, Bell Canada wants you to know what to do about it.

On Sept. 25, 1986, new terms of service came into affect for Bell Canada and certain other telecommunications companies regulated by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission.

Now customers can have recourse to obscene phone calls through the courts.

But the important thing to remember is that tracing procedures on behalf of customers will only be initiated when a police officer in the course of a lawful investigation asks the calls to be traced.

This is how it stands.

First let's imagine a scenario. It's nearing midnight, the wind is making you hear footsteps in the hallway, you're alone in the house and just then some lunatic calls and threatens to blow you away. This is not enjoyable for anyone.

Well in such a situation, don't worry. Bell Canada's hardworking customer services personnel will do their best to refer emergency calls immediately to the police.

But what if the call is not "emergency," or one which does not carry a "direct or implied physical threat?"

Well it might be a long night.

In such cases, Bell wants you to follow a "self-help approach," which is included in the introductory pages of the telephone directory.

Just how are you going to help yourself? Bell advises that you "don't talk," since the caller just wants an audience anyway. Also you should "hang up" if the caller doesn't say anything or refuses to identify himself or if foul or offensive language is used.

Now if some hooligan continues to call you, the only thing you can do in self-defence is call the police. Bell will not trace the call just because someone is bothering you; they have to receive an official request from the police.

There is a good chance that by the time this has been processed, the obscene caller will have found other lodgings.

But Bell has plenty more advice for the recipient of the obscene phone call.

You shouldn't show the caller that you are annoyed over his suggestive phrases or filthy mouth.

Also if you are trapped into a conversation with the caller (rather unlikely unless you really aren't annoyed over the call) mention your report to Bell Canada.

But if the caller knows the legalities of this particular hobby, he will probably know that a call to Bell Canada is meaningless without police action.

Bell will even go further though. If it is really necessary, a service representative will endeavour to develop a

"profile" of the call. This handy bit of categorizing tries to define and characterize the type of call you are receiving. Is it obscene? Is it abusive? Is the caller trying to sell vacuum cleaners? What time of day does he call?

So if they can narrow it down to a psychotic who phones faithfully every evening at 6 p.m., just before you sit down to watch the news, the service representative may offer the customer and unlisted phone number, or a temporary new telephone number. The original number would be restored after an agreed-to length of time.

Bell then advises, "If these steps do not result in a satisfactory solution (ie: no more wacko calls), customers will then be advised to file a complaint with the police and to obtain a complaint number for future reference.

If the police deem it necessary to attempt to identify the origin of the annoying or offensive calls, they must contact the Bell Canada security department office nearest to them.

Preventing robberies

Admit it: it's a jungle out there. People breaking into things, vandalism, crime.

But as the local police department likes to say, "Crimes against business are usually crimes of opportunity." Making it more difficult to break in will be making it more arduous for the thief to steal.

As far as lights go, have lights on inside and outside the building. There should be a night light outside the building, a night light over the safe, all entry points, alleys and rear of building should be illuminated.

Make sure the locks are sound too. Install one-inch deadbolt locks on all outside doors and double cylinder, long-throw deadbolts on doors with glass panels.

Key control is very important. Ensure that padlocks are securely affixed and never left open, you will thereby prevent key duplication.

Now suppose you lose a key. "Well, I don't know where it is and no one else does either," might be the response from the less enlightened. Don't be so sure. Have the locks changed; it's less expensive than having the building cleaned out.

And think about this. What if the thief is already in the building when you are locking up. Maybe he's crouched in the closet or hiding behind the com-

puter. Maybe he's under your desk!

Have a look.

Secure all doors by putting metal lining on exterior doors, bars on rear doors and armored strike protection on glass and metal doors.

Don't be too cheap to replace a door which is falling apart. If there are cracks in it, large areas of obvious weakness, or termites living in two-thirds of it, then replace it. The lock isn't doing you much good.

The same common sense should apply to windows. Don't make it easy to break in. Don't obstruct the view of a window so a thief can work his way in undetected.

Buy an alarm system and keep it functioning properly.

Keep your safe in plain view; don't hide it in the back of the store. A safecracker likes nothing better than privacy in which to practice his trade.

Don't keep an abundance of money in the safe. Go to the bank with irregular frequency.

Keep the grounds surrounding your place of business clean. Leaving weeds around will only encourage robbers to try your place of business; if you don't care enough to maintain the lawn or sweep the sidewalk, you might not care enough to protect your business.



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Oh what a feeling!

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