

## GENUINE TOSHIBA PARTS AND SUPPLIES

### BUYER BEWARE PROGRAM

With Office Supply Scams—a form of telemarketing fraud which is costing U.S. businesses an estimated \$200 million a year, Toshiba America Business Solutions (TABS) wants to bring more attention to these operations that are selling toner at inflated costs. We want to share the information related to associated company references, the key tactics that we are finding and to share steps to take to avoid office supply fraud.

- **COMPANY IDENTIFICATION**

Most of these telephone solicitors will identify themselves to sound like a government agency or well known company or as your regular supplier without mentioning his/her company name. The invoice will most likely come from a “Distribution” company, different from the company that made the initial sales call.

- **KEY TACTICS**

- **Pretender Scam** Caller pretends to be your regular supplier or in some cases, the manufacturer and falsely claims that prices are going up or other tactics of sale due to surplus, etc.
- **Phony-Invoice Scam** Caller gets an employees name and address so that your organization can be shipped and billed for un-ordered goods or services.
- **Gift-Horse Scam** Caller tricks an employee into accepting a gift - a free promotional item—with a passing reference to identify merchandise used and will send overpriced, unordered merchandise, followed by an invoice with the employees name. They hope that your organization will think that they have to play as a result of your blunder.
- **Invoice Collection Scam** These scam artists will send as many invoices as it takes to get your money with invoices often stamped with “Past Due”. They will in some cases resort to bogus collection agencies and threats of legal action.
- **Brush Off Scam** If an organization complains that they didn’t order the merchandise or that the price is too high, the scam artist will either 1. bully—state that they have a recording of acceptance or that they can take you to court, 2. Negotiating—seller agrees to accept a lower price, 3. Charging for returned merchandise—seller claims to charge a restocking fee for returning goods.

- **STEPS TO TAKE TO AVOID OFFICE SUPPLY FRAUD**

1. **Know your rights**

- If you receive supplies or bills for services that you didn’t order, don’t pay, and don’t return the unordered merchandise.
- Treat any unordered merchandise you receive as a gift.
- It’s illegal for a seller to send you bills or dunning notices for merchandise you didn’t order or ask you to send back the merchandise if the seller offers to pay the shipping cost.
- Remember that a contract is nonbinding if the company misrepresented themselves to be your normal supplier.

2. **Assign designated buyers and track your purchases**

It is important to assign specific employees as buyers. Those buyers are the only ones that should be assigning purchase order numbers and ensuring that they are included on the invoice and bill of lading. They should also be responsible for sending a copy of the purchase orders to accounts payable.

3. **Check all documentation before you pay the bills**

Your receiving department should be checking to make sure that your purchase orders match the bill of lading. Brands and quantities should be checked closely and if it doesn’t match it should be refused. Bill of ladings should be forwarded to your accounts payable and further scrutinized.

4. **Train your staff**

Train everyone in how to respond to telemarketers. (ex: I am not authorized to place orders. If you want to see something you must talk to \_\_\_\_\_ and to get a purchase order). Establish a team of designated buyers, receivers and accounts payable reps and develop standardized buying procedures.

5. **Report fraud**

Report office supply scams to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC—www.ftc.gov - online complaint form) or toll free by phone at (877) FTC-HELP (382-4357), your State Attorney General, local consumer protection office or Better Business Bureau and your authorized Toshiba dealer.