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The Better Business Bureau of Minnesota and North Dakota (BBB) is noting an uptick in reports of the "Tech Support" scam. Consumers have contacted the BBB in recent days reporting phone calls from people identifying themselves as computer technicians and telling potential victims they're calling because they've noted issues with their home – or business – computers. The BBB is urging people not to be fooled by these calls, as they are not legitimate and are designed to either solicit credit card numbers or gain remote access to computers, which could lead to personal or financial information being compromised.

"As in most cases, there's a level of plausibility to this scam," said Dana Badgerow, president and CEO of the BBB of Minnesota and North Dakota. "Scammers tell consumers they're calling because of an operating flaw or because they've noticed their computers are running slow. And many older computers do run slow. However, consumers need to know these cold calls are bogus. When you have a computer problem, you call the expert. It's not the other way around."

In many instances of this scam, people report the callers have foreign accents. They also sometimes identify themselves as being with Microsoft.

According to Microsoft, once these scammers are given access to a computer they can install malicious software, steal personal information, take control of the computer remotely or direct customers to fraudulent websites where they are asked to enter their credit card information.

The BBB offers these tips to avoid the Tech Support scam:

Don't trust cold calls. Remember, computer firms don't call you about a problem – you call them. Also, never give out your personal information over the phone to someone you don't know. If a caller claims there's a problem with your computer, simply hang up.

Protect your computer – All computers should always have the most recent updates installed for spam filters, anti-virus and anti-spyware software and a secure firewall.

Find a computer repair firm you can trust. If you are having computer problems or technical issues, visit bbb.org to find a BBB Accredited Business you can depend on.