

809 Area Code Scam

Recommended for: Individuals and Parents

This long distance phone scam causes consumers to inadvertently incur high charges on their phone bills. Consumers usually receive a message telling them to call a phone number with an 809, 284, 649, or 876 area code in order to collect a prize, find out information about a sick relative, etc. The caller assumes the number is a typical three-digit U.S. area code; however, the caller is actually connected to a phone number outside the United States, often in Canada or the Caribbean, and charged international call rates. Unfortunately, consumers don't find out that they have been charged higher international call rates until they receive their bill.

AT&T recommends the following tips to help avoid the 809 area code scam:

- Return calls to familiar numbers only. As a general rule, return calls from numbers that contain familiar or recognizable area codes. You may call your directory assistance or long distance operator to check the area code location.
- Carefully read your telephone bill. Make sure that you only receive charges from your provider of choice. Ensure you thoroughly understand charges listed on your phone bill, have chosen to do business with all of the listed providers billing for those charges and have authorized additional fees invoiced. If your local service provider has changed, you will receive a final bill from the former provider and a notice of service disconnection.

If you believe that you have been scammed:

- Contact the carrier with whom the charge originated, whose name and toll-free telephone number should be printed on the same bill page as the charge in question. Often, the problem can be resolved with a single phone call.
- If the carrier with whom the charge originated does not agree to resolve the problem, [contact AT&T](#). AT&T will work with you and the carrier to help remove fraudulent charges from the phone bill.

Additional information:

- [Federal Communications Commission](#)
- [CTIA](#)
- [Snopes](#)