

NY officials warn of phishing scam using fake text messages

BY KELDY ORTIZ

keldyortiz@newsday.com

Unwanted texts, either to sell New Yorkers something or steal their private information, are the focus of state efforts aimed at protecting consumers' pocketbooks and their personal data.

On Monday, the state Division of Consumer Protection warned consumers across the state to be on the lookout for a text message phishing scheme used to update personal information from a current driver's license. On Tuesday, Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo announced that he had signed legislation expanding the definition of telemarketing to include text messages.

The actions are attempts to shield unsuspecting cellphone users from phishing scams and unwanted robotexts from telemarketers, officials said.

The phishing texts reference "the Secretary of State NY Drivers License Facility" and tell "recipients they are required to update their data for their current NY Drivers License," said officials with the consumer protec-

tion division in a news release.

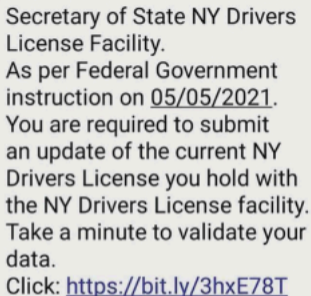
The texts are designed to steal personal data or sensitive information to commit identity theft or trick recipients into installing malicious software on a computer or a mobile device, state officials said.

"Anyone who received such a text message should delete it right away," the release said.

Never click on links sent in a text message from an unverified source, officials said, and avoid texting personal information or posting sensitive information online.

More information on the scams is available on the state Office of Information Technology Services Phishing Awareness resources page at <https://its.ny.gov/resources>, or the state Division of Consumer Protection Phishing Scam Prevention Tips page at <https://dos.ny.gov/identity-theft-prevention-and-mitigation-program>.

Since 2016, the division has received 1,244 complaints from consumers about text messages sent by "government impostors,"



Secretary of State NY Drivers License Facility.
As per Federal Government instruction on 05/05/2021.
You are required to submit an update of the current NY Drivers License you hold with the NY Drivers License facility.
Take a minute to validate your data.
Click: <https://bit.ly/3hxE78T>

A sample of the scam texts being sent to New Yorkers.

state consumer protections officials said in an email Tuesday.

Text messages from phony DMV senders resulted in 37 complaints in 2020 with 270 already in 2021, officials said.

Cuomo on Tuesday, in announcing the legislation, said New Yorkers were already protected against unwanted robo-calls under state law, but texts had previously been exempted.

"Our consumer protections

need to keep pace with technology and New Yorkers who have long been plagued by the nuisance of annoying calls from telemarketers now have to contend with unwanted texts attempting to sell them things they don't want," Cuomo said in a news release. "This legislation closes this annoying loophole and will help ensure our laws are modernized to confront the needs of New Yorkers."

PHOTO COURTESY OF CONSUMER PROTECTION

THIS DATE IN HISTORY

1798 Congress passed the Sedition Act, making it a federal crime to publish false, scandalous or malicious writing about the United States government.

1865 The Matterhorn, straddling Italy and Switzerland, was summited as a seven-member rope party led by British climber Edward Whymper reached the peak.

1914 Scientist Robert H. Goddard received a U.S. patent for a liquid-fueled rocket apparatus.

1943 President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a measure providing funds for a national monument honoring scientist George Washington Carver; the monument was built at Carver's birthplace near Diamond, Missouri.

1980 The Republican National Convention opened in Detroit, where nominee apparent Ronald Reagan told a welcoming rally he and his supporters were determined to "make America great again."

2015 World powers and Iran struck a deal to curb Iran's nuclear program in exchange for relief from international sanctions.