

Keeping Your Money Safe: Card Cracking

Businesses and individuals lose billions of dollars every year due to fraud. While PlainsCapital Bank has a seasoned fraud prevention team in place to protect our customers, we understand that the best protection is education. To that end, our Fraud Prevention Series, "Keeping Your Money Safe," highlights the latest fraud scams with helpful tips on how you can avoid them.

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During such difficult times in an ongoing pandemic, many people are feeling a financial squeeze due to job loss, late bills, or increased medical expenses. Whatever the case may be, it can be especially tempting to seek ways to make money quickly. In reality though, something that sounds too good to be true almost always is. There are criminals out there who will try to prey on people's desperation and an urgent need for money. One way they will attempt to do this is through card cracking.

How Does the Scam Work?

According to the American Bankers Association, card cracking is a form of fraud where consumers respond to an online solicitation for quick and easy money, such as a contest or a gift card giveaway. Criminals tend to use social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram to solicit consumers, often targeting people between the ages of 19 and 25 years old, as well as college students, newly enlisted military personnel, and single parents.

Customers who respond to these solicitations are asked to provide a debit card number, PIN, and online credentials to give the criminal direct access to their bank account. The criminal then deposits bogus checks using mobile deposit and immediately withdraws the funds at an ATM. When the customer then calls to report a stolen card or compromised credentials, the bank will often reimburse them for funds lost. Sometimes, the criminal will provide the customer with a cut of the money withdrawn. In either scenario the customer is now an accomplice to fraud (regardless of intent), according to the Federal Trade Commission.

How to Protect Yourself from Card Cracking Scams

The following options are methods you can employ to protect yourself from becoming an unwilling accomplice in these scams:

1. Do not respond to online solicitations for "easy money." Card cracking advertisements and solicitations will pretend that this is a quick and safe way to earn extra cash. However, easy money is rarely legal money, and even if you are in the middle of tough financial times, getting involved in a card cracking scam will only make matters worse for you.

2. Never share your account and PIN numbers. This is a safe practice in any type of attempted fraud, but especially in card cracking. Keep this information private at all times, even from family and friends. In a card cracking scenario, you won't be able to easily identify who is asking you

for your information—and that's a red flag. By sharing this information with others, you expose yourself to potential fraud.

3. Do not file false fraud claims with your bank. If you file a false claim, you are automatically a co-conspirator to fraud. Banks' detection techniques for card cracking are constantly improving and suspicious claims will be investigated. If you feel you were an unwilling participant in the scheme, the best thing to do is contact your bank's fraud department and report the matter to them.

4. Report suspicious posts linked with scams. If you notice postings that appear to be linked with a possible scam, report them to the social media site. Legitimate sites like Facebook and Twitter have resources for you to report possible fraud. This is a safer alternative than trying to confront the criminal directly.

Keeping Your Money Safe

As always, the "Keeping Your Money Safe" fraud prevention series is designed to help you thwart cyber criminals trying to acquire your personal information or infiltrate your devices. The key to protecting yourself is education and awareness. PlainsCapital Bank's Fraud Department provides educational resources for businesses and customers to help detect and prevent fraud on their accounts. For more information about our fraud prevention efforts, [visit our fraud resources page](#).