



Ontario Provincial Police  
Police provinciale de l'Ontario

## News Release/ Communiqué

**FROM/DE: Criminal Investigation Services  
Anti-Rackets Branch**

**DATE: March 28, 2012**

**OPP: LOWER INTEREST RATES MAY EQUAL MORE FRAUD VICTIMS  
*Don't trust offers that are too good to be true!***

**(ORILLIA, ON)** – Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) are warning consumers not to blindly trust phone calls that claim to be able to negotiate significantly lower interest rates on your credit cards or loans.

Members of the OPP Anti-Rackets Branch say this type of “[service scam](#)” is becoming more prominent during the tough economic times being experienced by many Canadians. Consumers who get these interest rate reduction offers – sometimes through automatically-dialled “robo-calls” – should listen to them with extreme scepticism because many are scams. What the callers really want is the processing fee, which is usually paid by credit card. Some even follow-up with a fraudulent client acknowledgement or cancellation clause that reimburse the amount EXCLUDING a “retainer fee.”

In 2011, [the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre](#) received 982 Canadian complaints of criminals who offered lower interest rates either online or over the phone to in return for some type of fee. Of those, 173 people were identified as victims who reported a loss of more than \$133 thousand. Again, there are likely many more victims but they are reluctant to [report](#) the crime.

It's important to note, companies behind these calls can't do anything for you that you can't do for yourself – for free. Indeed, investigators found that people who pay for these services don't get the touted interest rate reductions, don't save the promised amounts, don't pay off their credit card debt three to five times faster, and struggle to get refunds.

If you're looking to reduce interest rates is to call your financial institution or the customer service phone number on the back of your credit card and negotiate. And, if you are tempted by the promises made in a rate reduction 'robo-call', hold off – and hang up.

If you suspect you or someone you know has experienced an interest rate reduction scam or has been the victim of a [service scam](#), contact your local police service or CrimeStoppers at 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS).

FRAUD...[Recognize it](#)...[Report it](#)...Stop it.

### QUOTES

“Criminal telemarketers are relentless and will say anything to come between a vulnerable, unaware person and their money, regardless of the circumstances.



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Education, awareness and good, old-fashioned common sense are your best defence against becoming a victim.”

– Deputy Commissioner Scott TOD, OPP Investigations and Organized Crime

“You have just as much clout with your credit card issuer as these companies say they do. All the criminals want is easy access to small amounts of money...a pattern they repeat thousands of times a week across the country. Save yourself and your money...simply hang up the phone!”

-- Detective Inspector Paul Beesley, OPP Anti-Rackets Branch

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### LEARN MORE

OPP – [March is Fraud Prevention Month](#)http://"

[Glossary of Pitch Types from the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre](#)

**Service Scam:** Any false, deceptive, or misleading promotion of services or solicitation for services. These scams typically involve third parties that make offers for telecommunications, internet, financial, medical and energy services. This category of scams may also include, but is not limited to, offers such as extended warranties, insurance and sales services.

**Unauthorized Charge:** Any consumer's bank account or credit card that is charged for a service or merchandise (which may or may not have been performed and/or received) that was not authorized by the account holder. It may also occur what a consumer provides credit card or banking information to a company offering a free trial for a product. The company does not disclose the billing terms and/or conditions or does not have such details prominently displayed on their website which can result in repeated billing.

MEDIA NOTE: This is the fourth of five weekly OPP media releases on various criminal activities as part of Fraud Prevention Month.

**Contact:     Detective Constable Dave Felstead  
                  OPP Anti-Rackets Branch**

**Phone:        705-329-6467**