



HERMOSA BEACH NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

HBNW AWARENESS OF POSSIBLE SCAM

We have been contacted by a HBNW Block Captain regarding an incident that happened yesterday with what initially appeared to be two Verizon representatives soliciting "an upgrade" for the Verizon Fios Internet package.

Although we do not encourage residents to approach and confront "a suspicious" person, we appreciate that this information has come to us and that we can pass this awareness on to all HBNW Block Captain's and their residents.

We do encourage all residents to call the HBPD at 310-524-2750 (if calling from a cell phone) or 9-1-1 (from your home phone) to report suspicious behavior or activity that you feel is "just not right".

This is the e-mail conversation between the Block Captain, Ken Hartley and his neighbor. In this situation, the alleged Verizon representatives appeared to be real employees of Verizon. When the resident called Verizon today, it now appears to be a scam and could have become a crime had the resident let them in the home.

To: HBNW Kelly & Tracy

From: BC Ken Hartley (600 - 700 block of 30th Street)

I think this is valuable information to share with other block captains.

I actually felt confident when I looked at the ID badge and saw the customer list in his hand that this was a valid solicitation. I was unsure if a solicitation permit was required "IF" the resident was a customer (like Verizon) but didn't ask for anyone to come to his/her home. I assumed they did not stop at my house because I already pay for the highest speed Internet connection Verizon offers. Now after seeing my neighbors email & discussion with Verizon, I highly doubt they were legitimate, but with the information they produced - it certainly seemed legit to me at the time.

To: Ken

From: Block resident

As a follow-up to my telecom last night, I called Verizon this a.m. to inquire whether "raising the speed of my Internet Fios Service" is customarily done by an unsolicited appearance of individuals at one's door vs. doing same at their facility by remote connection with my Fios connected computer?

Answer: Never - Verizon does the bump-up inside through their network never at a customer's home. Nor do they ask for access to the home unannounced.

Facts: Last night - about 5:45 p.m. (after the BCSS Championship pre-game was over) my doorbell rang - I answered the door and observed two (2) males were there. The man speaking had only a Verizon (baseball cap) type hat on. The non-speaker had no identification except it appeared he had a security badge on a string around his neck. (The speaker appeared to be Hispanic and the non-speaker white - both around 5'7" to 5'9" medium build.)

The speaking party - tried to pronounce my name (he couldn't) but he kept looking at his clipboard. He said he was there to increase the speed of my FIOS Internet. I replied that I never requested same. I asked what they were doing without my requesting them to come into my home?

The speaker said, it would benefit my connection speed to allow him and his partner to come in. I refused again, saying I did not request the service call. They left and I called you.

What's interesting was there was no Verizon truck anywhere on the 700 block of 30th. You indicated you intercepted them as they were walking on the 600 block (not in a Verizon truck) and identified yourself as a Neighborhood Watch Captain. They were able to apparently produce some form of ID and explained why they were in the neighborhood.

Response: Since I spoke to Verizon's rep. this a.m. and as indicated above she indicated they never (repeat never) come unrequested or unannounced, I believe that they may have tried to scam me to try and gain access. But I can't prove it as I never let them in.

Would appreciate your follow-up with HBPD to determine if they were on any other block in Hermosa and what the outcome of these visits were.

We did follow up with Chief of Police Greg Savelli and Dect. Mick Gaglia. Neither were aware of any crime or calls to HBPD involving alleged Verizon representatives in HB. The Chief encourages residents to call the HBPD first and then to alert their block residents. With the HBPD on their way to the location, neighbors can be called or e-mailed to not open the door until it is verified as a legitimate solicitation.

With recent crimes in Manhattan Beach and Redondo Beach involving criminals approaching people on the street/mall and demanding (by force) their possessions, HBNW felt that this information needed to be shared with its members.