

The Active Consumer

Protect Yourself From Wireless Phone Fraud

by Wally Hyer

(NAPSA)—If you're one of the 137 million wireless phone subscribers in America, then you already know how to stay connected while you're on the go. But do you know how to stay protected? Here are some tips on how to avoid becoming a victim of fraud in the wireless phone age:



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- Guard your wireless phone like any other valuable. For instance, don't

leave your phone in a car or other unattended location. Most wireless phones can be used for long distance and international calling, in addition to local calls. This makes wireless phones all the more attractive to thieves.

- If your wireless phone *is* lost or stolen, immediately notify your wireless carrier. AT&T Wireless, for example, will swiftly take any necessary steps—including shutting down service for the missing phone—and won't hold you responsible for any charges that occur after you notify them.

- Most manufacturers have built security features into wireless phones, so review your owner's manual and user guide for instructions on how to take advantage of these features. For example, you may be able to pass-

word-protect the private information stored in the memory of your phone, such as your address book, and restrict the ability to make outgoing calls.

- Safeguard your personal information, including your wireless invoice and any other bills, receipts, and credit information. With "identity theft" on the rise, it's wise to shred sensitive materials before throwing them away.

- If you begin to receive frequent wrong numbers or hang ups on your wireless phone, contact your carrier to be certain no one else is using your wireless phone number. Fortunately this practice, known as "cloning," has become infrequent due to sophisticated authentication systems now used by the wireless industry and manufacturers.

Companies such as AT&T Wireless use state-of-the art technology and procedures to deter and detect fraud, but the most powerful weapons against fraud are the preventive measures only *you* can take. Remember: chances are that you won't become a victim of wireless phone fraud, but that doesn't mean you should take chances.

- *Wally Hyer is the Chief Privacy Officer of AT&T Wireless (NYSE:AWE), the largest independent wireless carrier in the United States. For more information on AT&T Wireless, visit www.attwireless.com.*