



For Immediate Release
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Maine’s Bureau of Financial Institutions warns public about online banking update scams

GARDINER – Maine’s Bureau of Financial Institutions at the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation warns of a scam involving updates to financial institutions’ online banking platforms. The messages, typically sent to a consumer’s email address, appear to come from a consumer’s financial institution, claiming that the bank or credit union is updating its online banking platform and that the consumer needs to provide verification of account information. The scammers request that the consumer click through links in the email, which direct the user to a site asking for sensitive account information. The messages threaten immediate suspension of the consumer’s access to online banking services unless the account information is provided.

The Bureau of Financial Institutions reminds consumers to look out for this scam and not to divulge bank or credit union account numbers or other personal information by email, text, or phone. The customers of several banks and credit unions received emails related to this scam, and anyone with an email account is a potential target. “Banks and credit unions will not email, text, or call customers asking them to divulge account numbers, pins, or social security numbers,” Superintendent Lloyd P. LaFountain III said.

LaFountain emphasized that customers receiving unexpected e-mails regarding online banking updates should call their bank or credit union directly and talk to an employee. Financial institution employees will be able to inform the consumer if the bank or credit union is currently updating its online banking system. The Superintendent also noted that customers should always be vigilant to protect their personal information and monitor account statements.

If a consumer suspects he or she has received a scam email, the consumer should:

- Not click through any links in the email. Clicking the link itself may expose the consumer’s personal information to scammers and harmful software.
- Never provide personal account information or other personal information in response to an e-mail, text, or call. A bank or credit union does not request personal account information in such a manner.
- Be on the lookout for suspicious links. Check the “From” header in any email received – if the name of the author of the email does not match the author’s email address, this is a sign of a potential scam attempt. Another way to check suspicious links is to hover the cursor over the link without clicking the link itself – by doing this, the address for the link will appear on the consumer’s screen. If the link address shown on the screen is different from what the email says, this is a sign of a potential scam.

The Bureau of Financial Institutions has a consumer library with helpful information about how consumers can spot and avoid financial scams. Also, the Bureau's Consumer Outreach Specialist is available to answer any consumer questions related to financial scams or accounts in general. The Bureau's phone number is 207-624-8570. The website is www.maine.gov/pfr/financialinstitutions/index.shtml.

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