



**Weld County
District Attorney's Office
Nineteenth Judicial District**

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Fraud Alert!

THE 809 AREA CODE

Scam or Urban Legend?

Weld County District Attorney Kenneth R. Buck would like you to take note of the following information so that you aren't the next victim.

The message on your answering machine sounds urgent. Someone is trying to get in touch with you regarding a sick family member, a death, an arrest, or maybe a wonderful prize you have won. Regardless of the reason, you are asked to call a phone number right away. The area code: 809.

Here is where the scam blurs a bit toward urban legend. Emails alerting people to this scam, including a version allegedly from AT&T (the email contains a partial phone number and the name of an imaginary employee), warn consumers that if they call the 809 area code they will be charged as much as \$2,400.00 per minute.

The scam is real; the \$2,400.00 per minute charge is not, according to the AT&T website.

What is true is that you will be charged standard international rates when you make an international call. In most cases, you must dial 011 to reach an international location. There are some numbers, however, outside of the United States, such as the Caribbean and Canada, where telephone numbers resemble domestic long-distance

numbers but carry a higher international rate (and you don't have to dial 011). Two things to remember: first, you are responsible for the charges you incur when calling internationally from your phone; and second, know where you are calling.

Here is how the scam works:

- Someone leaves a message on your phone or your pager asking you to return their call immediately. The reasons for the urgency vary.
- The bogus email or voicemail claims the 809 area code is for the British Virgin Islands; it is in fact for the Dominican Republic.
- Call the number, and a scam artist tries to keep you on the phone for as long as possible to increase your long distance charges.
- You have willingly made the call so you will be responsible for the charges incurred from the call. You must pay your phone company, and your phone company, in turn, must pay the scammer because the charges are valid. **Know where you are calling!**

**Contact your local police agency if you think you are a victim of a crime.
To contact the Weld County District Attorney's Office, call (970) 356-4010 ext. 4722.**

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