

Be vigilant against potential fraudsters

With the silly season fast approaching, Absa urges customers to take the necessary precaution and avoid becoming unsuspecting victims as fraudsters intensify their efforts during this period.



Head of Absa Fraud Risk Management, Paul Mathias, says that while many people are planning and preparing for their holidays, there is usually an increase in criminal activity so customers need to be more alert.

He urges customers to register for Absa's NotifyMe service, which automatically sends an SMS to customers when there is any activity on their accounts - such as ATM withdrawals, debit orders and credit card purchases, for instance.

This service can be customised according to the types of transaction for which a customer wishes to receive notification, the values of transactions, and also to indicate the times of the day that they would not want to be disturbed by an SMS.

Mathias says that customers should always remember that without the correct PIN, an ATM card is useless. Therefore, fraudsters can be thwarted by following simple precautionary steps:

Avoid becoming a victim of fraud by taking action on the following:

1. Protect your personal information and this refers to your:

a. Full name and surname

b. Identity number

c. Address details

d. Contact details

e. Account numbers and or PIN numbers

2. Criminals can take over your existing accounts impersonating you and can use your facilities for their own benefit. Therefore, take meticulous care of your handbag or wallet.

3. Criminals can also assume your identity through amending your lost or stolen ID or driver's licence and buy goods in your name, leaving you in debt. As a result, avoid carrying documents such as ID's and passports unless necessary.

4. Criminals can also intercept your mail from your home, office or in the postal system, and use your personal information to commit crime. It is therefore advisable to follow up on all personal mail due to you that has not arrived.
5. Shred all documents that provide your personal information, such as:
 - a. *Credit or bank statements*
 - b. *Letters from doctors and employers*
 - c. *Receipts*
 - d. *Anything bearing your full name and address or signature*
6. Scrutinise your bank and credit card statements carefully and report any discrepancies immediately.
7. Don't give your personal details to callers, charity collectors or alleged researchers without verifying whether they are truly who they claim to be.
8. Avoid disclosing or writing down any PIN numbers or passwords and try to avoid using the obvious pins passwords (for example date of birth, mother's maiden name, etc.).
9. Keep your home and office environment secure and keep your personal documents locked away.
10. Do not click on links in e-mails claiming to be from Absa. [This applies to other financial institutions and SARS, for example.]
11. Do not respond to e-mails, text messages or telephone calls that ask for information such as account number, PIN, password, RVN and TVN.
12. Do not browse the internet while logged on to your internet banking.

Mathias stresses that if you believe that you have been a victim of identity theft, approach one of the credit bureaus for a copy of your credit record, as this would highlight any suspicious applications for credit against your name. Liaise with the relevant credit provider in the event of an unknown account reflecting against your name.

He adds that Absa will always endeavour to find innovative and creative ways to protect its customers from various fraudulent activities.

If your card is lost, stolen, retained or jammed, or you are interfered with at an ATM, call your nearest branch or the Absa Card Stop number 0800 111 155 immediately.