



Commission for
Communications Regulation

Information Notice

PBX Hacking and Telephony Fraud

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1 Foreword

Recently, the Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) has become aware of an incident of telephone hacking resulting in financial exposure to an unsuspecting business.

These hacking incidents tend to occur predominantly during out-of-office hours where the perpetrators gain remote access to the private exchange belonging to the business by hacking through unsecured points within the telephone system.

ComReg would like again to remind the business community of the risk this type of activity can pose and suggest some steps that should be considered. We will also continue to engage with service providers on the matter.

John Doherty
Chairperson

2 Details of Notice

ComReg has been alerted to a further incident of PBX hacking and subsequent placing of fraudulent telephone calls.

A PBX (Private Branch eXchange) is telephone equipment that is installed by a business to provide a number of telephone extensions within an office. PBXs operate as a connection between the business and the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN).

Typically, an incident tends to occur when business premises are unattended. Calls are placed and routed via the PBX and, in the majority of cases, the business owners are unaware of the event. In the most extreme cases, potential costs of thousands of Euros can be incurred by the perpetrators of this fraud. ComReg understands that these “attacks” are possible because the PBXs in question have not been fully secured and the victims are unaware of this potential security issue.

ComReg continues to engage with all relevant service providers to ensure that they continue to remain vigilant on behalf of their business customers.

These activities constitute fraud and are a matter for An Garda Síochána should they occur. Nevertheless, ComReg would like to raise awareness of the problem amongst the business community generally.

To this end, ComReg advises that businesses who are concerned about this should:-

- 1. Contact your PBX phone system supplier to ensure that the system is secured.**
- 2. Report any instances to the Garda Bureau of Fraud Investigation on 01-6663766.**
- 3. Advise your telecommunications service provider immediately if you suspect that your PBX system has been hacked.**

ENDS