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ictQATAR Seeks to Protect Mobile Phone Users for Spam/Scam

“Don’t fall for it.” ictQATAR warns

Doha, Qatar (3 March 2008): ictQATAR has released tips to educate consumers and help them protect their mobile phones from increasing amounts of spam and scam. Recently, mobile subscribers in Doha have been receiving fraudulent calls informing them they have been randomly selected by Vodafone to win USD 160,000. The caller instructs to transfer an amount of QR 6,000 to a certain bank account to claim the prize.

ictQATAR has confirmed that this is not a Vodafone offer and warns mobile users not to fall for the trick. The phone calls are the work of a fraudulent group using the Vodafone name to trick excited consumers into giving away their money.

What is Mobile Spam?

Mobile spam includes unsolicited and unwanted text messages sent to mobile phone without customers' request. Most spam comes from advertisers and marketers trying to sell products and services. Spam messages are sent out in bulk to thousands of mobile subscribers at a given time. In most cases, these messages are sent without the consent of telecommunications service provider (i.e. Qtel) and do not have an "opt out" option.

Examples:

- *You won QR500,000, call this Number xxx to get your prize.*
- *Sale or promotion @ xxx tomorrow!*
- *Someone wants to meet you, call this number to "chat," "flirt" and meet new people...*

What is Mobile Scam?

Mobile scams are designed to trick consumers into using their mobile service to make money for someone else. A common technique is the missed call scam. For example, people may receive a call that hangs up quickly. After the phone registers a missed call, mobile phone users might call back, finding themselves signed up for services they don't want and cannot stop. To make matters worse, consumers could be left with a huge phone bill as these calls are charged at premium rates.

ictQATAR warns consumers to be on the look-out for advance fee scams; alleged offers for a large sum of money or a big prize in return for a fee paid in advance.

What is not Spam and Scam?

- SMS messages that relate to a requested service, such as a message from banks or government
- Messages from Q-tel regarding bills.

A list of Consumer Dos and Don'ts:

- Don't reply to spam SMS messages for unfamiliar messages or ones you have not requested.

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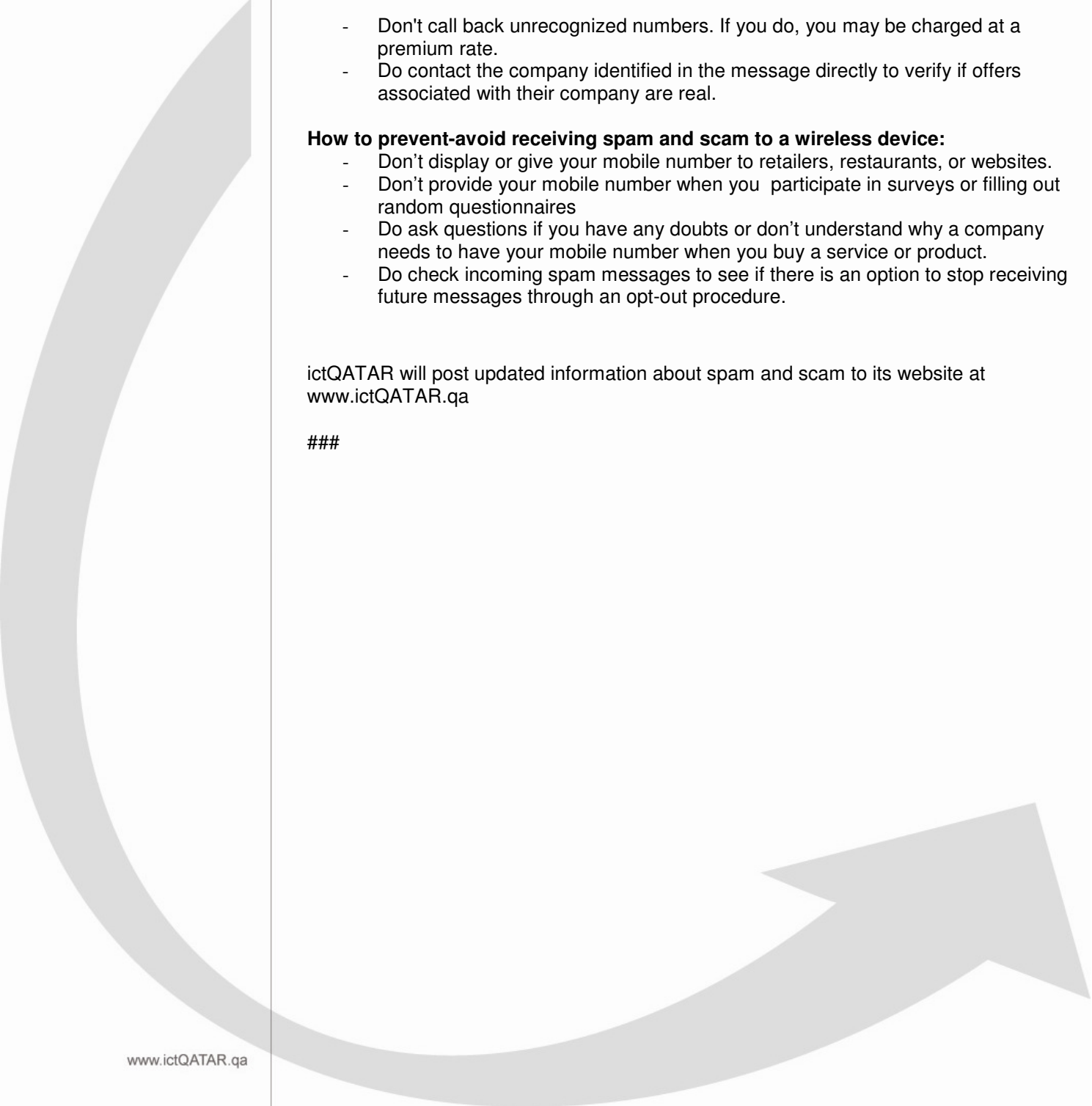
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ABOUT US

ictQATAR, The Supreme Council of Information and Communication Technology, is Qatar's telecommunications regulatory authority and initiator of multiple information and communication technology programs designed to drive industry and advance the lives of Qatar's people. ictQATAR aims to promote an advanced ICT society through the development of infrastructure and skills, the delivery of e-services and education, and the fostering of a regulatory environment conducive to sustainable growth. For more information please visit our website www.ictQATAR.qa

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- Don't call back unrecognized numbers. If you do, you may be charged at a premium rate.
 - Do contact the company identified in the message directly to verify if offers associated with their company are real.

How to prevent-avoid receiving spam and scam to a wireless device:

- Don't display or give your mobile number to retailers, restaurants, or websites.
- Don't provide your mobile number when you participate in surveys or filling out random questionnaires
- Do ask questions if you have any doubts or don't understand why a company needs to have your mobile number when you buy a service or product.
- Do check incoming spam messages to see if there is an option to stop receiving future messages through an opt-out procedure.

ictQATAR will post updated information about spam and scam to its website at www.ictQATAR.qa

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