12 Steps to Protect Your Mobile Device from Fraudsters

WASHINGTON—The increased popularity of mobile banking has caught the attention of fraudsters. According to a 2015 survey by the American Bankers Association, two in five Americans (39 percent) use a mobile device to manage their bank account at least once per month. In recognition of National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, ABA recommends that consumers take extra precaution to protect the data on their mobile device.

“Mobile banking provides an unprecedented level of convenience for bank customers, and while it is a safe way to conduct banking transactions, customers need to remember that any device used to connect to the Internet is vulnerable,” said Frank Keating, ABA president and CEO.

ABA suggests following these 12 steps to protect your mobile device:

- **Use the passcode lock on your smartphone and other devices.** This will make it more difficult for thieves to access your email, texts and other information if your device is lost or stolen.
- **Log out completely** and close the app when you finish a mobile banking session.
- **Watch out for public Wi-Fi.** Public connections aren't very secure, so don’t perform banking transactions on a public network. If you need to access your account, try disabling the Wi-Fi and switching to your mobile network.
- **Use caution when downloading apps.** Apps can contain malicious software, worms, and viruses. Beware of apps that ask for unnecessary "permissions."
- **Download the updates** for your phone and mobile apps.
- **Avoid storing sensitive information** like passwords or a social security number on your mobile device.
- **Beware of mobile phishing.** Avoid opening links and attachments in emails and texts, especially from senders you don’t know. And be wary of ads (not from your security provider) claiming that your device is infected.
- **Wipe your mobile device before you donate, sell or trade it using specialized software or using the manufacturer’s recommended technique.** Some software allows you to wipe your device remotely if it is lost or stolen.
- **Tell your financial institution immediately if you change your phone number or lose your mobile device.**
- **Be aware of shoulder surfers.** The most basic form of information theft is observation. Be aware of your surroundings especially when you’re punching in sensitive information.
- **Protect your phone from viruses and malicious software, or malware, just like you do for your computer by installing mobile security software.**
- **Report any suspected fraud to your bank immediately.**

For more information -- and tips to protect your mobile device, your identity or your small business account – visit aba.com/consumers.

The American Bankers Association is the voice of the nation’s $16 trillion banking industry, which is composed of small, regional and large banks that together employ more than 2 million people, safeguard $11 trillion in deposits and extend more than $8 trillion in loans.