



An Láirionad Náisiúnta
Cibearshlándaála
National Cyber
Security Centre

NCSC Advisory

WhatsApp Verification Code Scam
August 2024

ncsc.gov.ie

TLP: CLEAR

Recipients may share this information without restriction.



An Roinn Comhshaoil,
Aeráide agus Cumarsáide
Department of the Environment,
Climate and Communications



WhatsApp Verification Code Scam

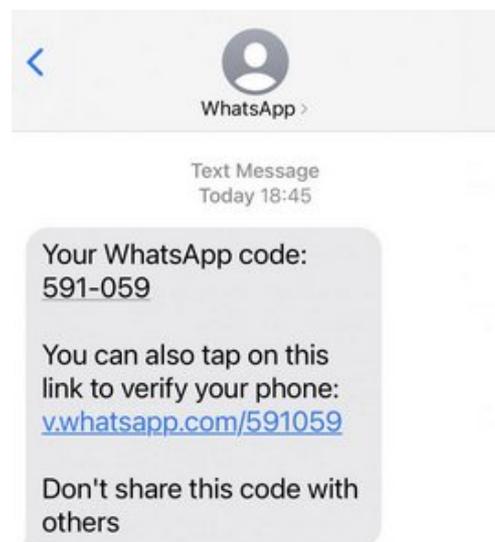
Thursday, August 22, 2024

NCSC have become aware of an escalating trend of **'WhatsApp Verification Code Scams'** being deployed against users in Ireland. Users should remain mindful when using WhatsApp for business purposes and the data that may be exposed by the compromise of their WhatsApp account.

Description of the scam

Initial Steps:

- The scammer first obtains the victim's phone number.
- The scammer enters the victim's phone number into WhatsApp's login screen.
- WhatsApp sends a verification code to the victim's phone as part of its security process.



Legitimate WhatsApp Verification Code

Scammer's Tactics:

- The scammer contacts the victim via WhatsApp, pretending to be a friend or family member from the victim's contact list.
- This impersonation is possible because the scammer has already compromised the account of someone the victim knows, using the same technique.
- The scammer creates a sense of urgency, asking the victim to share the verification code, making it seem like an urgent request from a trusted contact.



Victim's Response:

- The victim, believing they are helping a friend or family member, may share the code without questioning the request.
- If distracted or caught off guard, the victim is more likely to comply.

Consequences for the Victim:

- Sharing the code gives the scammer full access to the victim's WhatsApp account.
- The scammer can lock the victim out of their account.
- The compromised account can be used to further spread the scam or exploit the victim's contacts.
- This may lead to additional security breaches, and potential financial or personal losses.

How to protect yourself

1. **Keep Your Verification Code Private:** Think of your WhatsApp verification code as a secure password. It should never be shared with anyone. WhatsApp will never request this code directly, and neither should anyone else.
2. **Activate Two-Step Verification:** Enhance your account security by enabling two-step verification, which requires a PIN in addition to the verification code when accessing your account. You can enable this feature in WhatsApp settings under Account > Two-step verification. For more detailed instructions:
https://faq.whatsapp.com/1920866721452534/?helpref=hc_fnav&locale=en_US
3. **Be Cautious of Urgent Requests:** Even if a message appears to be from someone you know, be wary of urgent requests for money or sensitive information. Always confirm their identity through a phone call or another trusted method.
4. **Report and Block Suspicious Activity:** If you receive suspicious messages or encounter questionable accounts, report them within WhatsApp. To do this, press and hold the message, select "Report," and follow the on-screen instructions.

Are you a victim of this scam?

- If your account has been compromised by this scam, you can contact WhatsApp support at support@whatsapp.com for assistance.
- If someone has gained unauthorised access to your account, contact An Garda Síochána through your local Garda Station.

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Additional information:

WhatsApp account safety and security

https://faq.whatsapp.com/898107234497196/?helpref=uf_share

