BILL'S HOME TECH

Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

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The Fake "It's Me, I Got a New Number" Text

Why that sweet 'Hi Mom, new phone!' text is a scam — and the one move that beats it

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SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

A friendly text from an unknown number claiming to be family with a 'new number' is one of today's most common scams. The texter is fishing for a warm reply, then builds a little trust before asking for money through a method that can't be undone. Never save the new number or share details based on the text alone — confirm by reaching the real person on the number you already have.

Don't tap links, and know that the money request always comes a few friendly messages later. Block, delete, and forward scam texts to 7726 to report them, and turn on your phone's message spam filtering to cut down the flood.

- A 'new number' text is a scam opener until you confirm otherwise.
- Confirm on the old number — never trust the text alone.
- The money ask always comes later; don't wait for it.

1 The Short Version

You get a friendly text from an unknown number: 'Hi Mom, I dropped my phone in the sink — this is my new number, save it!' It feels harmless, even sweet. But it is one of the most common scams going right now. The texter is fishing to see who answers warmly, and the moment you reply, a conversation begins that ends with a request for money — a bill they can't pay, a deposit they're short on, a quick favor.

The fix is simple and foolproof: never update a contact or trust a 'new number' based on a text alone. Reach the real person on the number you already have. If they really did change numbers, they'll confirm it — and if it's a scam, you've lost nothing. This guide shows you the whole playbook so it can't catch you.

- A text claiming to be family or a friend with a 'new number' is a very common scam opener.
- Never save the new number or share anything until you confirm who it really is.
- Confirm by calling or texting the person on the number you ALREADY have.

- The ask for money always comes a few friendly messages later — don't wait for it.

> **TIP**
> Think of it like a stranger at your door saying 'I'm your nephew's friend, he sent me.' You wouldn't hand over cash — you'd call your nephew. A 'new number' text deserves the exact same instinct.

2 How the Scam Works

These scammers send the same message to thousands of numbers at once, hoping a few people will reply as if talking to family. They don't know who you are yet — your warm reply tells them. That's why the first message is vague and friendly, mentioning 'Mom,' 'Dad,' or just 'hey, it's me.'

Once you reply, a real person (or a convincing script) takes over. They chat kindly for a while to build trust, often claiming to be a child or grandchild. Then comes the pivot: a story and a request for money, usually through a method that can't be undone.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> Because the opening text is a blind guess, the scammer leans on YOU to fill in the details. If you reply 'Is this David?' you've just handed them a name to use. Make them prove who they are instead of guessing for them.

3 The Tells in the First Message

These opening texts share a family resemblance once you know what to look for.

- It comes from a number you don't recognize, often with an out-of-area or odd area code.
- It claims a phone was lost, broken, or replaced — a reason you 'can't' reach them the usual way.

- It's warm but vague: 'Hi Mom,' 'it's your favorite,' 'guess who got a new phone!'
- It nudges you to save the number right away, before you think to check.

> **WATCH OUT**
> Some of these texts don't ask for anything at first — they just want a reply. A single 'who is this?' confirms your number is real and read by a person, which can bring more scam texts. When in doubt, don't reply; verify instead.

4 The One Move That Beats It

You never have to figure out whether the texter is really your loved one. You simply confirm through a path you already trust, and the scam collapses.

1. Do not reply to the new number with names or details, and do not save it yet.
2. Open your contacts and call or text the person on the number you already have for them.
3. Ask plainly: 'Did you just text me from a new number?'
4. If they say yes, great — now you can save it. If they're confused, it was a scam.
5. Delete the scam text, and report it if you'd like (covered later).

> **WATCH OUT**
> If you genuinely can't reach the person, ask a mutual family member whether they've heard about a new number. A real number change usually spreads through the family; a scam does not.

Rather not do this yourself? I'll come to your home and set it up for you — a flat $99 first visit across Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities. Outside the area? I also help remotely by phone or screen-share. Book at billshometech.com/book or call (330) 200-8042.

5 What Happens If You Reply

It helps to see where the conversation goes, so you recognize it even a few messages in and can step out gracefully.

1. First, friendly chit-chat to build rapport — 'how are you, I've missed talking.'
2. Then a problem appears — a late bill, a deposit, a payment they can't make from the 'new phone.'
3. You're asked to help 'just this once,' often by gift cards, an app like Zelle or Venmo, or a wire.
4. There's a reason it must be now and can't wait or go through normal channels.

WATCH OUT

The request may be modest at first — 'can you cover $200, I'll pay you back Friday.' A small, reasonable-sounding ask is deliberate; it's easier to say yes to, and it opens the door to bigger ones.

6 The 'Wrong Number' Cousin

A close relative of this scam opens with what looks like a message sent to you by mistake — 'Hi Jennifer, are we still on for lunch?' When you kindly reply 'I think you have the wrong number,' a long, friendly conversation begins that can drift toward romance or, eventually, a crypto 'investment tip.'

- A stranger texts a friendly message clearly meant for someone else.
- They respond warmly to your correction and keep chatting over days or weeks.
- The talk slowly turns to how well they're doing with an investment, often crypto.
- Eventually you're invited to 'get in on it' — the real goal all along.

GOOD TO KNOW

This slow version is sometimes called a 'pig butchering' scam because of how patiently the victim is fattened up with friendship before the ask. The kindest move is to simply not engage a wrong-number text from a stranger.

7 How to Reply Safely (Or Not At All)

Your safest response to any unknown-number text that tugs at your heart or seems misdirected is usually no response at all. If you do want to be sure, keep it to a verification you control.

- Best: don't reply to the new number; confirm with the real person separately.
- Never share your name, your family members' names, your location, or any account details.
- Don't tap links in the text — they can lead to fake login pages or harmful sites.
- If it's clearly a stranger's wrong number, you can simply ignore and delete it.

> **WATCH OUT**
> You are never rude for not replying to a text from an unknown number. Silence costs you nothing; a warm reply to a scammer costs you their full attention.

8 Block, Delete, and Report

Once you've confirmed a text is a scam, a few taps get rid of it and help cut down future ones.

1. Block the number from your messaging app (usually by tapping the number at the top and choosing Block).
2. Delete the message thread.
3. On an iPhone, you can 'Report Junk' under a message from an unknown sender; on Android, use the 'Report spam' option.
4. You can forward scam texts to 7726 (which spells SPAM) to report them to your phone carrier.

GOOD TO KNOW

Reporting to 7726 is a free service most U.S. carriers support. It helps them spot and block scam-texting campaigns, so your one report quietly protects a lot of other people.

9 Turn On Your Phone's Spam Filtering

Your phone can catch a good share of these before they ever reach you, if you switch the filtering on.

- On an iPhone, Settings has a 'Filter Unknown Senders' option under Messages that sorts texts from strangers into a separate list.
- On Android, the Messages app has spam protection you can enable in its settings.
- These won't catch everything, but they thin out the flood and flag the obvious ones.

WATCH OUT

We have a companion guide, 'Turn On the Scam Protections Built Into Your Phone,' that walks through every one of these settings in detail. Turning them on is a quiet, one-time win against a daily nuisance.

Rather not do this yourself? I'll come to your home and set it up for you — a flat $99 first visit across Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities. Outside the area? I also help remotely by phone or screen-share. Book at billshometech.com/book or call (330) 200-8042.

10 If You Already Replied or Sent Money

If you chatted back, or worse, sent money, take a breath. Quick action makes a real difference, and this has happened to countless kind, sensible people.

1. Stop messaging the number and block it.
2. If you sent money by an app like Zelle or Venmo, contact your bank or the app immediately to try to stop or reverse it.
3. If you bought gift cards, call the card company's number on the back and report them as used in a scam.
4. Change any password or detail you may have shared, and watch your accounts for a few weeks.
5. Report it to the FTC at ReportFraud.ftc.gov.

> **WATCH OUT**
>
> We have a full guide, 'I Sent Money by Mistake — Can I Get It Back?', for exactly this moment. And you can always call me and I'll help you work the recovery steps in the right order, without judgment.

11 Help Family Recognize It

This scam spreads by catching people in a warm, unguarded moment, so a quick heads-up to the people you love is worth a lot.

- Share the one rule: a 'new number' text gets confirmed on the old number, every time.
- Remind family that the money ask always comes later, after friendly chat.
- Let older relatives know it's fine — smart, even — to simply ignore texts from unknown numbers.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> Grandparents are often targeted because they're overjoyed to hear from a grandchild. Framing the check as 'let's make sure it's really them so we don't miss the real you' keeps it loving, not fearful.

12 Why This Scam Works So Well

It helps to understand why a smart, careful person replies to one of these in the first place — because it isn't about being gullible at all. The scam is engineered to catch you in a good mood, off guard, and full of love for your family.

- It arrives looking like good news — a grandchild reaching out — which lowers your guard.
- The 'lost phone' story neatly explains why the number is unfamiliar.
- Replying feels polite and natural; ignoring family feels rude.
- The money ask is delayed, so by the time it comes you already feel you're mid-conversation with family.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> Recognizing that the scam targets your kindness, not your intelligence, takes the sting out of it. There's nothing foolish about being warm toward family — you just need one habit, confirming on the old number, to turn that warmth into a strength instead of a weakness.

13 Keep a Calm Reply Ready

Having a plan for the moment means you won't be caught flat-footed. You don't even need to be clever — you need to be consistent.

1. When a 'new number' text arrives, resist the urge to reply right away.
2. Set the phone down and reach the real person on the number you already have.
3. If it checks out, save the new number then — not before.
4. If it doesn't, block, delete, and report, and give yourself a quiet pat on the back.

> **WATCH OUT**
>
> A good all-purpose response to any unknown number is simply to do nothing until you've verified. 'When in doubt, don't reply' is never the wrong call with a stranger's text.

14 When to Call Bill

These texts are a daily annoyance and an occasional danger, and you shouldn't have to wonder each time whether one is real. If you'd like help setting up your phone's filters and learning the simple confirm-first habit, that's a quick, friendly visit.

I'll turn on your message spam filtering, show you how to block and report with a couple of taps, and set up the confirm-on-the-old-number habit with you and your family. If a text has already gotten money or details out of you, call me — we'll work through stopping the damage together, calmly.

- You want your phone's text spam filtering turned on and explained.
- You keep getting these texts and want them cut down.
- You replied or sent money and want help limiting the damage.
- You'd like your family set up with the confirm-first habit.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

Keep this by the phone. When a 'new number' text arrives, run down this list.

I want to...	Do this...
Check if it's real	Call/text the person on the number you ALREADY have
Reply safely	Don't share names or details; don't tap links; or just don't reply
Spot the slow version	A friendly 'wrong number' that keeps chatting = walk away
Get rid of it	Block the number, delete the thread, report it
Report a scam text	Forward it to 7726 (SPAM) to tell your carrier
If you sent money	Call your bank/app right away; report at ReportFraud.ftc.gov
Get help	Call Bill: (330) 200-8042

BEFORE YOU GO

A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill. I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results.

HOW I CAN HELP

Your Visit — and My Promise

You don't have to remember all of it — just that a friendly, patient person is one call away, whenever you'd rather have a hand.

KEY SPECS

In your home — $99 flat for the first visit, no contracts and no surprises, with a 30-day come-back-free follow-up. In-home visits cover Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities.
Outside the area? Remotely — $49 for a screen-share session (free for Support Plan members, $39/mo), refundable if I can't fix it — and credited toward a visit if you'd rather have me in person. Book either at billshometech.com/book.

GOOD TO KNOW

My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full $99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated.

Whenever you're ready, I'll come to your home anywhere in Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities, at your pace. Too far for a house call? I also help remotely. Book at billshometech.com/book or call (330) 200-8042. — Bill

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