Rogue Cellular Phone Towers Spreading Across the Country

September 4, 2014 - If you have ever wondered if someone can listen in on your cell phone calls, wonder no more. And no, we're not talking about the NSA. At least 19 rogue cell phone towers have been discovered spread across the United States. They are likely the work of hackers and there is a good chance that there are many more which have not been detected yet.

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When you think of a cell phone tower, you probably think of a fairly large tower with large antennas protruding from them. But rogue towers don't look like that. Instead, they consist of a small box which is hooked up to a laptop computer; making them mobile.

Of the 19 towers that have been detected across the US, it isn't known who operates them. But they are perfectly capable of intercepting calls and data streams that come from smart phones.

The likely culprits are hackers. And since there are now millions of people who do everything from banking to shopping on their cell phones, these hackers have a very rich hunting ground, with access to account numbers, passwords and credit card numbersâ€¦ just to name a few things.

The known towers have been recently detected by a company named ESD America. The company manufactures high-end encrypted mobile phones for the government and individual consumers. As their phones have become more popular, the company has started detecting these rogue towers. Owners of ESD phones are given a warning when they are in range of a tower that isn't a part of a cell phone network.

At $3,500 per phone, most people aren't going to run out and buy one of ESD's devices. But simply knowing that your cell calls and data transmissions can be intercepted may help some consumers avoid issues. The bottom line is that you need to take the same precautions to protect yourself from rogue cellular towers that you do for protecting your personal computer. Anyone who is careless with the information they store on their phones, or which they openly transmit could find out the hard way that they are victims of fraud or ID theft.

byJim Malmberg

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