

Court Scams Affect Citizens Nationwide

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Across the United States, individuals posing as federal court officials and U.S. Marshals are targeting citizens, threatening them with arrest unless they pay.

"This year's scams are more aggressive and sophisticated than we've seen in years past," says Melissa Muir, Director of Administrative Services for the U.S. District Court of Western Washington. "Scammers are setting up call centers, establishing call-back protocols and using specific names and designated court hearing times."

A federal court will never threaten an individual or demand the immediate payment —either over the telephone or money wire service— for fines or for not responding to a jury summons.

"Receiving a call from someone impersonating a law enforcement officer and demanding money can be a frightening experience," says Jarrett B. Perlow, Chief Deputy Clerk for the U.S. District Court of Maryland. "As a court, we want to preserve and promote the integrity of the judicial process, and these calls, particularly those targeting prospective jurors, have the opposite effect. We urge victims of these calls to contact us immediately, so that we can answer any questions or concerns they have and provide them with quick peace of mind."

Avoid falling for a scam:

"Remember a scammer's power lies solely in his or her ability to create fear as a means of impairing judgement," says Raymond Fleck, Supervisory Deputy U.S. Marshal for the Judicial Security Section of Western Washington.

To take away a scammer's power:

- Separate yourself from the call to make a calm and collected assessment of the situation.
- Be aware of federal court policy on the failure to appear for jury service.
 - *Typically, jurors who miss jury duty will be contacted by the court Clerk's Office and may, in certain circumstances, be ordered to appear in court before a judge. A judge will impose any fine for failure to appear for jury duty during an open session of court, and the summoned juror will be given the opportunity to explain the failure to appear before any fine would (is) be imposed.*
- Hang up and contact your local court clerk's office or U.S. Marshals Service office to

check for any potential charges.

It is a serious crime for a person to falsely represent him or herself as a federal official. Those receiving any such phone calls should not provide the requested information, and should immediately notify the Clerk of Court's office of the U.S. District Court in their area.

Contact information for federal courts may be found through the [U.S. Courts court locator \(/court-locator\)](#).

Please note that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is in charge of the collection of federal tax debts. To check for any outstanding federal tax debt, contact the IRS at (800) 913-6050 and view their [collection process \(https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p594.pdf\)](https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p594.pdf).

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