

WARNING: Bogus Phone Calls on Jury Service May Lead to Fraud

In various parts of the United States, citizens are being targeted by phone calls and threatened with prosecution for failing to comply with jury service in federal or state courts.

In the calls, the threat of a fine for shirking jury service is used to coerce those called into providing confidential data, potentially leading to identity theft and fraud. In a very recent scam, residents in New Mexico reported they had received a call purportedly from court staff informing them they had failed to appear for jury service pursuant to a summons. None of them had actually been called for jury service, but each received a call from a man indicating that they missed a scheduled court appearance and instructing them that they needed to pay a \$400 fine or risk having a warrant issued for their arrest. They were instructed to take care of the \$400 fine immediately by going to a Wal-Mart or CVS to purchase a "money pack" -- a type of prepaid credit card. They were instructed that, after purchasing this "money pack" card, they were to call a specific phone number and read off the number on the money pack card for the payment to be made and the fine to be settled.

These calls are not from real court officials. Any phone contact by real court officials will not include requests for social security numbers, credit card numbers, or any other sensitive information.

Jury duty is a vital civic responsibility and should be taken seriously by all citizens. However, it is a crime for anyone to falsely represent himself or herself as a federal court official. The federal judiciary takes seriously such an offense.

Persons receiving such a telephone call should not provide the requested information, and should notify the Clerk of Court:

Chattanooga and Winchester:	(423) 752-5200
Greeneville:	(423) 639-3105
Knoxville:	(865) 545-4228