

# Common Phone Scams Explained

## JURY DUTY & WARRANT SCAMS

### HOW IT WORKS:

You get a call from someone posing as local law enforcement, an officer of the court or a representative from the district attorney's office. The caller says you failed to report for jury duty (or other violation) and a warrant has been issued for your arrest. Most people will instinctively reply they never received a notice cueing the caller to ask for personal information, like your date of birth and social security number for "verification purposes." After receiving your personal information, some scammers will inform you that you can clear your record by paying a fine with a credit card or wire transfer. Other times, callers will request you get a prepaid card, provide the scammer with the card number and pin over the phone and then send the card by certified mail to the local clerk of courts. To help the call appear legitimate, your caller ID may even show a police phone number.

### RED FLAGS TO RECOGNIZE:

1. You're contacted out of the blue. Courts almost exclusively contact residents about jury duty or missed jury duty by postal mail, not by phone.
2. There is a sense of urgency to act. Scammers try to get you to act before you've thought things through. Don't fall for it.
3. Threatening and vulgar language. Law enforcement, court officials and government agencies won't pressure or threaten you. If you have a warrant out for your arrest, typically law enforcement will just come and arrest you.
4. Untraceable payment methods. Beware of requests to pay using unconventional payment methods. These are almost always a scam.
5. Requires you to provide personal information. It's important to remember that court officers, police officers, and other government representatives will never ask for confidential information over the phone. Most contact with prospective jurors will be through the U.S. mail.

### HOW TO HANDLE IT:

Hang up! If you ever question whether you need to appear in court, call the appropriate judicial agency. Don't call the number you were given by the caller, as that will likely just lead you back to the scammer. Look for official websites in your jurisdiction.

If you receive a suspicious call or email you may wish to report it to your local law enforcement, district attorney, or local district court office.

If you suspect identity theft, act quickly. Please report it to the Federal Trade Commission by calling 1-877-382-4357 or visiting their website at [ftc.gov/complaint](https://ftc.gov/complaint).