

# SCAM ALERTS



If you receive communication that purports to be from this court, you may call 703-299-2100 (Alexandria Division), 804-916-2200 (Richmond Division), or 757-222-7201 (Newport News/Norfolk Division).

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***November 15, 2017: U.S. Marshals Urge Public to Report Phone Scams to Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Scammers may take advantage of holiday season to steal your money***

The U.S. Marshals are alerting the public of several nationwide imposter scams involving individuals claiming to be U.S. marshals, court officers, or other law enforcement officials. They are urging people to report the calls not only to their local U.S. Marshals Service office, but also to the Federal Trade Commission. The FTC has the ability to detect patterns of fraud from the information collected and share that data with law enforcement.

“These are not victimless crimes,” said U.S. Marshal Bobby Mathieson. “People have lost thousands of dollars to these scammers. This can be devastating, especially during the holidays.” The U.S. Marshals hope the information collected by the FTC will lead to possible arrests.

During these calls, scammers attempt to collect a fine in lieu of arrest for failing to report for jury duty or other offenses. They then tell victims they can avoid arrest by purchasing a prepaid debit card such as a Green Dot card or gift card and read the card number over the phone to satisfy the fine.

**“The U.S. Marshals would never ask for a credit/debit or gift card number or banking routing numbers or ask for funds to be wired for any purpose,”** said U.S. Marshal Bobby Mathieson. **“If the caller is urging you to provide this type of information or any other personal or financial information, hang up and report the call to the Marshals and the FTC. You can even report to both agencies anonymously.”**

Scammers use many tactics to sound credible. They sometimes provide information like badge numbers, names of actual law enforcement officials and federal judges, and courthouse addresses. They may also spoof their phone numbers to appear on caller ID as if they are calling from the court or a government agency.

**“While these callers may sound legitimate, we urge people to question their validity,”** said U.S. Marshal Bobby Mathieson. **“The easiest way to do this is to call the clerk of the court’s office of the U.S. District Court in your area and verify the court order.** If an order does not exist, someone just tried to swindle you out of your hard-earned cash.”

**If you believe you were a victim of such a scam, you are encouraged to report the incident to your [local U.S. Marshals Service office](#) and to the [Federal Trade Commission \(FTC\)](#).**

### **May 27, 2017: U.S. Marshals Continue to Warn of Phone Scam**

The U.S. Marshals Service is warning the public of several nationwide telephone scams involving individuals claiming to be U.S. marshals, court officers, or other law enforcement officials.

In one scam, the caller attempts to collect a fine in lieu of arrest for failing to report for jury duty. The U.S. Marshals Service does not call anyone to arrange payment of fines over the phone for failure to appear for jury duty or any other infraction. In another scam, call recipients are told they have won the Publishers Clearing House sweepstakes and are directed to pay a fee in order to claim the prize.

In order to appear credible, these scammers may provide information like badge numbers, the names of actual law enforcement officials and federal judges, and courthouse addresses. They may also spoof their phone numbers to appear on caller ID as if they are calling from the court or a government agency.

Victims have been told they can avoid arrest or claim a prize by purchasing a prepaid debit card or gift card and reading that number over the phone to the scammers. The Marshals Service urges the public not to divulge personal or financial information to unknown callers, even if they sound legitimate. Actual court orders can be verified through the clerk of court's office of the U.S. District Court in your area.

If you believe you were a victim of such a scam, you are encouraged to report the incident to your [local U.S. Marshals Service office](#).

#### **Things to remember:**

- U.S. Marshals will never seek payment of fines via the telephone for individuals who missed jury duty or have outstanding arrest warrants.
- U.S. Marshals will never ask for credit/debit card/gift card numbers, wire transfers, or bank routing numbers for any purpose.
- Don't divulge personal or financial information to unknown callers.
- Report scam phone calls to your [local U.S. Marshals Service office](#).

### **December 23, 2015: U.S. Marshals Warn of Phone Scam**

The U.S. Marshals Service is warning the public today of a telephone scam involving a man posing as a U.S. Marshal. The man reportedly identifies himself as a U.S. Marshal while calling victims to advise that he or she has missed federal grand jury but can avoid arrest by paying a fine immediately.

There are several reported incidents of this scam taking place this week in Hampton Roads. The Marshals Service became aware of the scam after receiving several calls from alert citizens in the Norfolk, Virginia area.

The U.S. Marshals Service is a federal law enforcement agency and does not seek payment of fines or fees via the telephone for individuals.

The U.S. Marshals Service urges individuals not to divulge personal or financial information to unknown callers and highly recommends the public report similar crimes to the FBI or their local police or Sheriff's office if they are the victims of fraud. For internet related fraud, the FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center can be contacted at [www.ic3.gov](http://www.ic3.gov).

Additional information about the U.S. Marshals Service can be found at [www.usmarshals.gov](http://www.usmarshals.gov).

### **July, 2014: Jury Email Scam**

Citizens are being targeted by a juror phishing email that asks recipients to provide personal identifiers (SSN, DOB, mother's maiden name, etc.) on an attached PDF form and emailed back to the originator. **Please do not respond to the email.** Our Court will not request that your personal identification information be sent directly in an email response. Our request for you to complete a qualification questionnaire will be initiated by formal

written correspondence and we will provide instructions for our juror participants to be authenticated over a secure connection.

### **June, 2014: Arrest Warrant Scam**

You've received a warrant by fax or email saying a federal law enforcement officer or an attorney for the government wants to arrest you. Charges may be for money laundering or bank fraud, or missed jury duty. To avoid arrest, the warrant says, send money. It's a scam. The warrants may display a bogus logo of an unspecified "United States District Court," a case number, and various charges. Typically, recipients are instructed to call a number to get a "settlement" or to wire money to avoid arrest. The warrant is phony. A valid warrant would not be served by fax or e-mail. It would be served in person by a U.S. Marshal or other law enforcement officer.

Anyone receiving a fake arrest warrant should contact the FBI or the district U.S. Marshals Office. If there is any question regarding the authenticity of a warrant, contact your district clerk of court. The fake arrest warrants have been reported across the country, including in the District Courts for the Southern District of Ohio, Southern District of Illinois, New Mexico, Western District of Kentucky, Utah, the District of Columbia, and throughout Florida. Anyone demanding or obtaining money or anything of value while impersonating an officer or employee of the United States may be fined and/or imprisoned up to three years.

### **January, 2014: Email Scam**

The federal judiciary has learned of an email scam, in which emails purporting to come from federal and state courts are infecting recipients with computer viruses.

According to the Security Operations Center of the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, the emails are instructing recipients to report to a hearing on a specified day and time or in the form of an eviction notice. The emails also instruct recipients to review an attached document for detailed case information. When the attachments or links in the email are opened, a malicious program is launched that infects the recipient's computer. Several state courts have reported similar schemes, and also are warning the public about potential viruses.

Unless you are actively involved in a case in federal court and have consented to receive court notifications electronically, you generally will not be served with court documents electronically.

### **August, 2013: Jury Telephone Scam**

Increasingly, calls are being made to the public from individuals who claim to be an officer of the court, stating that the person failed to report for jury duty and a warrant has been issued for their arrest. When the person denies receiving the summons, the caller asks for verification in the form of date of birth, social security number, place of employment, or even a credit card number. Fraudulent emails are also being sent to the public indicating that they must report for jury duty on a federal case.

These are scams and are malicious attempts to obtain personal information from you or to have you falsely report to a courthouse. Do not provide any information to the caller and hang up the phone immediately and delete any emails that summons you for jury duty on a federal case. Clerk's Office staff will never ask you for this kind of personal information or summons jurors by email. At most, a Clerk's Office staff member might ask you to confirm your mailing address to ensure that jury summonses are received.