

MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT



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Beware jury duty scam phone calls, e-mails, State Court Administrator warns

LANSING, MI, January 28, 2013 – It may sound official – and intimidating: you receive a phone call or e-mail claiming to be from a local court and telling you that you missed jury duty. There is a bench warrant out for your arrest and you face 30 days in jail, but the so-called “court” offers you a way out: pay \$500 by credit card.

But don’t be fooled, warns the State Court Administrative Office, the administrative agency of the Michigan Supreme Court. It’s only a scam that works by intimidating its victims.

State Court Administrator Chad C. Schmucker said variations of the scam have been reported in Michigan from time to time, most recently in Muskegon County, according to a [story](#) in the Muskegon Chronicle. Schmucker cautioned Michigan residents to be on guard.

A similar phone scam involves threatening victims with arrest for missing jury duty unless they give up personal information, such as birth dates and Social Security numbers, Schmucker said.

“In yet another variation of this scam, the victim gets a text message saying that the victim is subject to arrest unless he or she calls the phone number in the text and pays up by credit card,” Schmucker explained. “To make the demand seem plausible, the scammer often uses the name of an actual local court or court official.”

But, Schmucker said, all of these scams “are just deception through intimidation. Don’t fall for the scam, but report it to the police and to the court that the caller or message claims to represent. In addition to the attempt to defraud the victim, it’s a crime for anyone to falsely pose as a court official.”

Moreover, prospective jurors can call courts, but courts do not initiate those calls, Schmucker said. “And courts do not call people who’ve missed jury duty to get their financial information,” he added.

To avoid becoming a victim of these scams, remember the following:

- Be suspicious if a person calls, e-mails, or texts you claiming to be a court official.
- Be skeptical if you are told, “In order to avoid arrest (or prosecution), you must provide us with your Social Security number so we can verify who you are.”
- Be suspicious if the caller, e-mail sender, or text message sender pressures you for immediate payment or other action, or refuses to send you written information to review.
- Never give out your bank, credit card, or Social Security information over the phone to someone who calls you, or in response to an e-mail or text message.
- Report suspicious calls, e-mails, and text messages to local police.