

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DELAWARE JUDICIARY ISSUES WARNINGS ABOUT PHONE SCAMS

Bogus phone calls are on the rise, making false claims about warrants, jury duty, fines and fees and fraudulently demanding immediate payment.

In recent weeks the Delaware Judiciary has been made aware of phone scams where scammers claim to be representing the court, and in the most recent variation, victims are directed to deposit cash in a bitcoin ATM to resolve fictional warrants, fines or some other alleged court matter.

It is important to know that Delaware Courts NEVER demand payment in the form of gift cards, or through cash apps like Venmo or Zelle (where transactions are difficult to track once complete) or in the form of bitcoin or other internet-based e-currency.

In the newest twist to the phone scam, victims are contacted by phone, text or email, claiming there is an outstanding warrant related to missing jury duty (or some other made-up charge) and direct the victim to call a phone number to resolve it. Once on the phone, or sometimes in the initial contact, the scammers electronically send detailed and authentic looking documents, describing how the victim can go to an official “kiosk” (which in reality is a bitcoin ATM) to pay to resolve the issue. In this scam the criminals sometimes insist the victim remain on the phone during the entire transaction to walk them through the steps to feed money into the kiosk, which is going to an account controlled by the scammers.

In a prior version of this same scam, the criminals simply texted a copy of a bogus “order of arrest” and then directed the victim to a specific non-governmental address to make a cash payment.

The Delaware Judiciary wants to assure the public that these are not legitimate calls and that no one with our courts, jury services, Delaware State Police, or other law enforcement agencies would ever call and make such threats and demand immediate payment.

A red flag that these are scams is the false urgency created through the demands for immediate payment in ways that are difficult to trace like cash, gift cards or certain electronic payments. Delaware’s courts generally notify Delawareans about their obligations by mail.

If you receive a call like this, make note of the caller's name, claims made by the caller, and the phone number used if you have caller ID. Hang up and immediately contact your local law enforcement agency to verify the information or contact the courts during normal business hours to check any claims about alleged courts actions. Scammers can fool caller ID into displaying an incorrect number and may use the names of actual court or police officials as part of their scheme

If you have questions about jury duty, you can check to see if you have been summoned by calling Delaware Superior Court Jury Services at **302-255-0800** for New Castle County, **302-735-1901** for Kent County, and **302-855-7055** for Sussex County. A prospective juror who has failed to report for Jury Service will be contacted by mail.

If you have a question or want to check on claims about court-imposed costs, fines, restitution or other fees, please contact the Office of State Court Collections Enforcement (OSCCE) at an in-person OSCCE office location at a courthouse or through other approved methods like state-operated payment kiosks at DMV offices. For more information visit the [Office of State Court Collections Enforcement - Administrative Office of the Courts - Delaware Courts - State of Delaware](#) website or call OSCCE at (302) 255-0339.

If you have a question or want to check on claims about an outstanding warrant, you can check for any outstanding warrants online at [Delaware Criminal Justice Information System](#).

You can learn more about phone scams by visiting the Federal Trade Commission's consumer advice webpage at [Phone Scams | Consumer Advice \(ftc.gov\)](#).