

Telephone ‘Jury Duty’ Scam: Ignore It

There is a new phone scam that is in vogue now, and it preys upon your fear of being arrested for contempt of court for missing jury duty. Chief Fitzgerald received the below email from a resident of Somerset; read it and it will describe how the scam works.

I received a phone call this afternoon informing me that I did not show up for jury duty on January 26, and therefore 2 warrants have been issued to me - one for failure to appear and the other for contempt of court - totaling \$880. I was told that I have to immediately pay this amount and then appear before a Montgomery County judge in Rockville and the money would be refunded to me if I had a valid excuse.

Since many of the details sounded unusual -

- 1) the sergeant said that a summons to jury duty had been mailed to me in December which I never received*
- 2) I could purchase a voucher at a commercial store like 7-11 but would have to give them cash only*
- 3) I couldn't go up to the courthouse to handle this before paying the fine as I would be subject to arrest and be in jail for 72 hours because of the warrants*
- 4) the voucher had to be paid for this afternoon or tomorrow morning*

I called Congressman Van Hollen's office who said it was probably a scam and was told to call the Montgomery County Circuit Court Jury Service office which I did, and it was confirmed that it was a scam - the 4th report they got this week- and that fines are paid directly to them, never to a third party.

The Chevy Chase Village Police Department recommends that you do the following to reduce your likelihood of being scammed over the telephone:

- Consider not answering the phone. If you don't recognize the incoming number, ignore the call and let it go to voicemail.
- *Never* provide any information to someone who calls you.
- Get information from the caller: Ask for their name, mailing address, website address, phone number, and the name of a supervisor.
- Register your phone number on the National Do Not Call Registry at www.DoNotCall.gov or by calling 888-382-1222.
- Report suspicious callers to the Village Police Department, to the Maryland Attorney General's Office at 888-743-0023, and to the Federal Trade Commission at 877-382-4357.