

Fraud Alert!

Jury Duty Scam

This scam has been around for several years but has recently resurfaced in a few Bucks County communities. Due to these increased reports and the potential threat of identity theft, we felt it is worth repeating. The information below is a typical “jury duty scam” scenario:

Your phone rings and the caller identifies him/herself as an officer of the court. Often times, the caller claims to be a jury coordinator. He or she claims you failed to report for jury duty and that a warrant is issued for your arrest. You protest, of course, that you never received a summons in the mail, and this must be a mistake. The caller informs you that in order to correct the mistake, he/she must verify who you are, and to see if a jury summons was issued. If a summons was not issued or if the court made a mistake, the “officer” of the court could cancel the arrest warrant. For "verification purposes," all you need to do is supply your birth date, social security number, address and maybe even a credit card number – exactly what the scammer needs to commit identity theft. At this point, you should **NOT** supply any personal information and hang up the phone.

It is easy to see why this scam works. The victim is clearly caught off guard, and is understandably upset at the prospect of a warrant being issued for his or her arrest. The victim is less likely to be vigilant about protecting confidential information.

For your information:

- Court workers will **never** call you to ask for your social security number or other private information. In fact, most courts generally correspond with prospective jurors via mail.
- Before you provide any information, hang up and contact the courthouse directly if you are uneasy about the phone call. If you were *in fact* scheduled for jury duty, court personnel will explain what you need to do. Again, the real court officer will not ask you for personal information. If you are asked for basic information such as your phone number or address, you may feel more comfortable because you initiated the call.
- **Never** give out your Social Security number, credit card number or other personal confidential information over the phone, on the internet or face-to-face UNLESS it is someone you know and can trust.
- Examine your credit card and bank account statements every month to see if there are unauthorized charges. Immediately contact your bank or credit card company to challenge items you did not approve. Also, ask about putting a credit freeze or fraud alert on your accounts, and be sure to obtain a FREE annual credit report. If you need help with the above-mentioned services, be sure to call your local Consumer Protection Office.

If this scam has happened to you or someone you know, contact your local police department or one of the Task Force members below.

BUCKS COUNTY CRIMES AGAINST OLDER ADULTS TASK FORCE

Bucks County District Attorney's Office
215-348-6344

Bucks County Consumer Protection
215-348-6060

Bucks County Register of Wills
215-348-6265

Bucks County Area Agency on Aging
215-348-0510

Network of Victim Assistance
1-800-675-6900

Bucks County Coroner
215-348-3852

www.crimesagainstolderadultsbucks.org
24 - HOUR HOTLINE 1-800-490-8505