

SCAM #17 ALERT

Don't fall victim to jury duty scams

Jury duty scams have been around for years, but have been on the rise in recent months. This scam is effective because it catches victims off guard and puts them in a defensive position, where they fear they might have to serve jail time. Here's how it all works.

The bait

The phone rings and the caller claims to be a jury coordinator. They inform you that there is a warrant out for your arrest because you failed to show up for mandatory jury duty. Since you have never been informed of the jury duty, you tell the scammer that this must be some kind of mistake and that you want to straighten everything out.

The hook

Now that the scammer has your attention, the scam can take two different directions. Either they will tell you that you can avoid charges by paying a small fine using your credit card over the phone, or that they will look into your claim but will require some information for "verification purposes," including your birthday, address, and even social security number!

Protect yourself, keep informed

As a general rule, court officials correspond via mail and never ask for information over the phone.

Never give out personal information when you receive an unsolicited phone call.

Always verify the source and think twice before revealing personal information.

Report suspicious behavior

With identity theft on the rise, it's important to take every precaution necessary to keep your identity safe. Finding scammers after they have stolen your identity can be difficult, so prevention is the best defense!

For more information on how to protect your identity, visit sefcu.com.



SEFCU is committed to helping members protect themselves against fraud. This is the seventeenth in a series of SCAM ALERTS to educate members about deceptive activities that could harm members' financial security. While we cannot advise members of every scam, we hope the series will advance awareness of privacy and security issues. ©SEFCU, March 2008