



Superior Court of California

COUNTY OF VENTURA
Hall of Justice
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

Michael D. Planet
Executive Officer/Clerk
and Jury Commissioner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VENTURA SUPERIOR COURT WARNS PUBLIC OF EMAIL AND PHONE SCAMS REGARDING COURT FINES AND NOTICE TO APPEAR IN COURT

VENTURA – Any recipients of a recent phishing scam disguised as an email from the Ventura Superior Court should immediately delete the email and not open any attachments which may contain computer viruses or stealth programs to steal personal information for possible identity theft.

Recently, the Ventura Superior Court began receiving calls and emails from recipients of a phishing email which purports to be from the Clerk of the Court of the Ventura Superior Court as well as other law enforcement agencies. Several Email and phone scams now are widespread throughout the United States, falsely claiming that the intended victims have court cases or other legal issues pending in California, Arizona Florida plus many other states, and must pay money or provide private information.

Six different kinds of scams currently are ongoing, based on complaints received by California courts and other courts throughout the United States to date. However, new variations been appearing in the recent weeks. Examples of these scams include, but are not limited to:

- One telephone scam involves a caller impersonating a representative of the Sheriff's Department, who says that the intended victim has failed to appear for jury duty, and now must pay a fine to clear the case or be arrested.
- Email scam falsely stating that the intended victim has engaged in "illegal software use" and must appear in court.

- Another email scam falsely says that the intended victims have filed a court complaint or is the subject of court complaints. Many of these emails say they come from the "court secretary", "court clerk", "attorney" or others.
- Another telephone scam falsely says that the intended victim has been sued over an old debt and must make a payment to settle the matter.
- In some instances, these emails have impersonated the web addresses of well known law firms and may contain an attachment, supposedly a court notice or summons, or may contain a link to website. Some reports say that the attachment or link may download a virus onto the user's computer or device.
- Several Ventura County residents have received phone calls from a person claiming to be a Ventura County Sheriff's Department employee who demands payment via a Green Dot transaction to clear up an outstanding warrant. Callers are being told they did not show up for required jury duty and they have to pay a fine to clear up a warrant that has been issued. These calls are fraudulent and have no connection to the Ventura County Sheriff's Office.

Anyone who receives a phone call from someone demanding payment for an outstanding warrant should report the situation immediately as a crime. The calls are originating from a local number in the 805 area code. In this particular scam, investigators are working to identify the suspect(s) who made the calls. Anyone with information about the person or group responsible for this scam can contact investigators at the Camarillo Police Department at (805) 388-5100. Ventura County Crime Stoppers will pay up to \$1,000 reward for information, which leads to the arrest and criminal complaint against the person(s) responsible for this crime. The caller may remain anonymous. The call is not recorded. Call Crime Stoppers at 800- 222-TIPS (8477).

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