

Fake jury duty phone calls should be directed to police

Written by George Browning
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Several Indiana trial courts have alerted the Division of State Court Administration and Indiana Judicial Center to a possible scam involving fake jury duty phone calls. There have only been a few incidents, but court leaders are alerting the public in the abundance of caution.

Judges in two Indiana counties (Henry and Hamilton) recently learned residents received similar phone calls making false claims about missed jury service. The caller accused the individual of failing to appear for jury duty and offered ways to resolve the situation by appearing in court or providing financial information to pay a fine. Courts are not aware of anyone who has been harmed by revealing personal financial information.

While practices vary, Indiana courts never ask potential jurors (or those who missed jury duty) for money. Courts never ask for specific bank account numbers, credit card information or Personal Identification Numbers (PIN's) and never call jurors and pressure them to reveal personal information—especially financial information.

In Indiana, all initial contact with potential jurors is conducted in writing through the mail. A written jury summons and/or questionnaire may ask for information such as name, age, occupation, marital status, prior jury service or whether the person understands the English language.

If a person fails to appear for jury duty the judge can send the sheriff to compel the individual to attend jury selection. A judge can hold an individual in contempt and require the individual to pay a fine for failure to appear. However, none of these actions takes place over the phone.

Questions about jury service or failure to appear for jury duty should be directed to the clerk or court in the county where the individual lives.

For a list of contact information see here: <http://www.in.gov/judiciary/2794.htm>.

Individuals who receive what appears to be a fake jury duty phone call should alert police.

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There are about 1400 jury trials in Indiana each year. Trial and appellate court judges want to take this opportunity to thank individuals who appear in court ready to serve and those who are selected for jury duty.