

Protect Yourself and Your Neighbors from Common Scams

Dear Spencer County Residents,

Scammers continue to target people of all ages and backgrounds, using phone calls, text messages, emails, social media, and even in-person visits to steal money and personal information. Staying informed is one of the best ways to protect yourself and your family.

Here are some of the most common scams currently affecting communities across the country:

Missed Court Date and Jury Duty Scams

Residents should be aware of a common scam in which criminals impersonate law enforcement officers, court officials, or government employees and claim that you have missed a court appearance, jury duty obligation, or other legal requirement.

The caller may state that a warrant has been issued for your arrest and that you must pay a fine immediately to avoid being taken into custody. Scammers often use caller ID spoofing to make it appear that the call is coming from a local sheriff's office, courthouse, or government agency.

Common Warning Signs

- You receive an unexpected call claiming you missed jury duty or a court date.
- The caller threatens arrest, jail time, or legal action unless payment is made immediately.
- You are instructed to pay using gift cards, cryptocurrency, wire transfers, or payment apps.
- The caller pressures you to remain on the phone while obtaining payment.
- You are told not to contact the court, an attorney, or family members.
- The caller demands personal information such as your Social Security number, date of birth, or banking details.

What You Should Know

- Courts and law enforcement agencies do not typically resolve missed court appearances or jury duty matters through immediate payment demands over the phone.
- Legitimate government agencies will not request payment through gift cards, cryptocurrency, or other unusual payment methods.
- Threats of immediate arrest designed to create panic are a common tactic used by scammers.

How to Protect Yourself

- Remain calm and do not provide personal or financial information.
- Do not send money or make payments based on an unsolicited phone call.
- Hang up and independently contact the court or law enforcement agency using a verified phone number.
- Discuss suspicious calls with a trusted family member or friend before taking action.

If You Receive a Suspicious Call

If someone contacts you claiming that you missed a court date, jury duty, or other legal proceeding and demands immediate payment, treat the call as suspicious. Verify the information directly with the appropriate court or law enforcement agency before taking any action.

Text Message and Email Scams

Fraudulent messages may claim there is a problem with a package delivery, bank account, toll payment, or online account. These messages often contain links designed to steal your personal information.

Protect yourself by:

- Avoiding clicks on links from unexpected messages.
- Verifying requests through official websites or customer service numbers.
- Deleting suspicious messages without responding.

Grandparent and Family Emergency Scams

Scammers may pose as a grandchild, relative, or friend claiming to be in trouble and needing money urgently. They often ask victims not to tell anyone.

Before sending money:

- Contact the family member directly.
- Verify the situation with another trusted relative.
- Be skeptical of requests for secrecy.

Online Marketplace and Purchase Scams

Whether buying or selling online, scammers may send fake payment confirmations, counterfeit checks, or requests to move conversations off trusted platforms.

Safety tips:

- Meet in safe, public locations when possible.
- Verify payments before delivering items.
- Avoid transactions that seem unusually favorable or rushed.

Charity and Disaster Relief Scams

Following natural disasters or major news events, fraudulent organizations may solicit donations.

To donate safely:

- Research charities before contributing.
- Donate directly through verified websites.
- Be cautious of high-pressure fundraising tactics.

Investment and Financial Scams

Promises of guaranteed returns, "risk-free" investments, or opportunities that seem too good to be true often are.

Take time to:

- Research any investment thoroughly.
- Consult a trusted financial professional.
- Never invest based solely on pressure or urgency.

General Scam Prevention Tips

- Never share Social Security numbers, banking information, passwords, or verification codes with unsolicited callers or messages.
- Use strong, unique passwords and enable multi-factor authentication when available.
- Trust your instincts. If something feels suspicious, pause and verify before taking action.
- Discuss potential scams with family members, friends, and neighbors.

Romance Scams: Protecting Yourself and Loved Ones

Romance scams are one of the fastest-growing forms of fraud, causing both emotional and financial harm to victims. Scammers create fake online identities and build trust over weeks or months through dating websites, social media, text messages, and email. Their goal is to establish an emotional connection and eventually ask for money or personal information.

Common Warning Signs

Be cautious if someone you meet online:

- Quickly expresses strong feelings of love or commitment.
- Claims to live or work far away and cannot meet in person.
- Consistently avoids video calls or in-person meetings.
- Has a profile with limited information or photos that seem overly professional.
- Creates a story involving an emergency, illness, travel problem, or financial hardship.
- Requests money, gift cards, wire transfers, cryptocurrency, or access to your financial accounts.
- Encourages you to keep the relationship secret from family and friends.

How to Protect Yourself

- Never send money or financial information to someone you have only met online.
- Be skeptical of requests for financial assistance, regardless of how convincing the story may seem.
- Conduct online searches of profile photos and suspicious messages to check for signs of fraud.
- Talk to trusted family members or friends about online relationships.
- Take your time and avoid making decisions based on emotional pressure.

If You Suspect a Romance Scam

- Stop communicating with the individual immediately.
- Do not send additional money or personal information.
- Save messages, emails, and transaction records.
- Contact your bank or financial institution if money has been sent.
- Report the scam to law enforcement and appropriate fraud-reporting agencies.

Romance scammers are skilled at manipulating emotions and gaining trust. Anyone can become a target, regardless of age, education, or background. Staying cautious, verifying identities, and discussing concerns with trusted friends and family can help prevent these scams from succeeding.

Reporting Scams

If you believe you have been targeted by a scam, report the incident to your local law enforcement agency and the appropriate consumer protection authorities. Reporting scams helps officials identify emerging trends, investigate fraudulent activity, and alert others in the community to potential risks.

To report a scam or seek assistance, contact:

Spencer County Sheriff's Office

18 E. Main St., P.O. Box 475

Taylorsville, KY 40071

Phone: (502) 477-3200

Dispatch (Non-Emergency): (502) 477-5533

Emergency: 911

Taylorsville Police Department

404 Railroad St

Taylorsville, KY 40071

Phone: (502) 477-3231

Dispatch (Non-Emergency): (502) 477-5533

Kentucky State Police – Post 12 (Frankfort)

1000 Louisville Road

Frankfort, KY 40601

Phone: (502) 227-2221

Kentucky Attorney General – Office of Consumer Protection

Consumer Protection Hotline: 1-888-432-9257

Consumer Protection Division: (502) 696-5389

Online Scam Report:

<https://secure.kentucky.gov/formservices/AttorneyGeneral/ScamReport>

Federal Trade Commission (FTC)

Report Fraud: <https://reportfraud.ftc.gov>

Phone: 1-877-382-4357

When making a report, provide as much information as possible, including dates, communications, payment details, screenshots, receipts, and any identifying information about the suspected scam.

By staying informed and looking out for one another, we can help make Spencer County a safer place for everyone. Please share this information with family, friends, and neighbors, especially those who may be more vulnerable to fraud.

Thank you for your attention and commitment to protecting our community.

Sincerely,

SHERIFF ANDREW WARE

SPENCER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

