



# Administrative Office of the Courts

P.O. Box 4820, Portland, Maine 04112-4820

Tel: (207) 822-0792 FAX: (207) 822-0781 TTY: (207) 822-0701

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Mary Ann Lynch  
Government & Media Counsel  
P.O. Box 4820  
Portland, Maine 04112-4820

Tel: (207) 592-5940  
mary.ann.lynch@courts.maine.gov

## Maine Court Issues New Scam Warning

August 4, 2014, Portland, Maine. Earlier this year, the Maine Judicial Branch sent out a press advisory on an email scam involving a virus or malware. Later last winter a phone scam pay employees occurred. Recently, Maine courts have received several reports from people that they have received a phone call telling them that they have missed a court date or a fine payment, or that a warrant will be issued because they failed to attend jury service. The recipient is told that they can pay the fine over the phone to avoid arrest. They are then asked to provide personal information. Earlier this week a York county resident was defrauded of \$1000. The telephone number that is appearing on the recipient's caller ID may actually appear as Maine courthouse or sheriff department telephone number. The ability to show a fraudulent caller ID telephone number is called "Caller ID Spoofing," and unfortunately happens with increasing frequency. Caller ID spoofing is the practice of causing the telephone network to display a specific number on the recipient's phone. Caller ID spoofing can make a call appear to have come from any phone number the caller wishes. Some scams involve the scammer impersonating a police officer.

Mary Ann Lynch, spokesperson for the Judicial Branch said: "The Maine Judicial Branch wants to remind Maine people that the courts' collection practices do not include telephone or email contact, and that no one working for Maine courts or the sheriff's department will request credit card, social security numbers, or other personal information either over the telephone or by email. Nor will they appear at your home looking for money. If someone does owe a court or traffic violation fine, they may receive a U.S. Postal Service letter, an arrest warrant may be issued, or their tax refund will be reduced by the amount of the debt owed to the state. They will not, however, receive a phone call or an email, nor will they even be asked for money at their home. People should not be giving personal information over the telephone or by email, and if they have a question about the authenticity of the request, they should call the local courthouse and speak to the court clerk and, of course, notify local law enforcement. "

Payments for traffic tickets can be made on line at: <http://www.informe.org/cgi-bin/paytixx/paytixx.pl> and payments for court fines can be made on line at: <https://www5.informe.org/online/courts/fines/>. Payments can also be made at the courthouse where the fine was ordered.

FMI: Mary Ann Lynch will be available for live video and radio interviews, Monday, August 4, 2014- from 6:00a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Please e-mail to [mary.ann.lynch@courts.maine.gov](mailto:mary.ann.lynch@courts.maine.gov) or call 592-5940 to schedule.