



NEWS RELEASE

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA • COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
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San Diego Superior Court Warns of Telephone Scam

No San Diego Victims Reported

The San Diego Superior Court is warning the public of a telephone scam involving individuals falsely trying to collect money on behalf of the court. At this point, it appears the scam has targeted out-of-state individuals.

This week, the court has received calls from residents in Houston, Texas and Muskegon, Michigan saying "collections officers" for the San Diego Court harassed them. The San Diego County Sheriff's Department investigated and determined the residents were confronted by a scam described as the "payday loan scam" where fake debt collectors harass victims to pay fictitious debts. It appears the callers are using numerous phone numbers that are "spoofed." (*A spoofed number occurs when the telephone number appearing on a caller I.D. is not the actual number where the call originated.*)

In the cases reported to the court, the callers identified themselves as attorneys for San Diego Superior Court and told the answering party that they worked at the courthouse at 220 W. Broadway in San Diego. The phone number given by the suspects contained a (760) area code.

The reporting parties said the callers spoke with a strong foreign accent. The victims reported hearing background noise during the calls to indicate several people talking on the phone in the same room, all with strong foreign accents. In addition, the suspects were described

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as very aggressive and threatening. Some victims reported being harassed numerous times a day and for years.

Investigators believe the suspects may be obtaining the victims' information after the victims submit applications on the internet. The suspects are in possession of the victims' names, addresses, phone numbers, work locations, social security numbers and bank account information.

While no San Diego County victims have come forward, the San Diego Superior Court is warning residents not to fall for the scam, "If any local residents believe they are fraudulently being called for court collections, they should take down the caller's number and immediately contact their local law enforcement agency," says Michael Roddy, San Diego Superior Court Executive Officer.

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