U.S. Marshals Say They Aren’t Making Calls

The U.S. Marshals Service is warning the public of several nationwide telephone scams involving individuals claiming to be U.S. marshals, court officers or other law enforcement officials.

What’s going on?
In one scam, the caller attempts to collect a fine in lieu of arrest for failing to report for jury duty. In another scam, call recipients are told they have won the Publishers Clearing House sweepstakes and are directed to pay a fee in order to claim the prize. In order to appear credible, these scammers may provide information like badge numbers, the names of actual law enforcement officials and federal judges, and courthouse addresses. They also may disguise their phone numbers for caller ID to make it appear they are calling from the court or a government agency.

Do they ask for money?
Victims have been told they can avoid arrest or claim a prize by purchasing a prepaid debit card or gift card and reading the number over the phone to the scammers. The Marshals Service urges the public not to divulge personal or financial information to unknown callers, even if they sound legitimate. Court orders can be verified through the clerk of court’s office of the U.S. District Court in your area.

How can you protect yourself?
Here are a few things to remember:

» The U.S. Marshals Service does not call anyone to arrange payment of fines over the phone for failure to appear for jury duty or any other infraction.

» U.S. Marshals will never ask for credit card, debit card or gift card numbers, wire transfers, or bank routing numbers for any purpose.

» Don’t divulge personal or financial information to unknown callers.

What should you do if you get one of these calls?
If you are a victim of such a scam, report the incident to your local U.S. Marshals Service office.