



**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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BEWARE OF PHONE SPOOFING

PURCELLVILLE, Va. January 17, 2020 — The Purcellville Police Department's main phone number (540-338-7422) was recently used in a phone spoofing incident. Luckily, the potential victim recognized that the call was in fact fraudulent, and instead hung up before a crime could be committed. The caller stated that he had a warrant out for the arrest of his potential victim due to "outstanding funds owed to U.S. Legal Fund" and he could resolve this by calling and paying off his debt by providing his credit card number.

Please be aware that the police department does not ask for money to settle a warrant. If you are ever in doubt of the validity of a call from the Purcellville Police Department, please call our number directly (540-338-7422) during administrative office hours Monday- Friday, 9am- 5pm, or call the Loudoun County dispatch (703-777-1021) after hours.

Spoofing is when a caller deliberately falsifies the information transmitted to your caller ID display to disguise their identity. Scammers often use local numbers or spoof a number from a company or a government agency (such as the police department) that you may already know and trust. If you answer, the scammer will use scam scripts to try and steal your money or valuable personal information, which can be used in fraudulent activity.

Below are some further tips to prevent yourself from falling victim of phone scamming.

- Never give out personal information such as account numbers, credit card numbers, Social Security numbers, mother's maiden names, passwords or other identifying information in response to unexpected calls or if you are at all suspicious.
- Don't answer calls from unknown numbers. If you answer such a call, hang up immediately.
- If you answer the phone and the caller, or a recording, asks you to hit a button to stop getting the calls, you should just hang up. Scammers often use this trick to identify potential targets.
- Do not respond to any questions, especially those that can be answered with "Yes" or "No."
- If you get an inquiry from someone who says they represent a company or a government agency, hang up and call the phone number on your account statement, in the phone book, or on the company's or government agency's website to verify the authenticity of the request. You will usually get a written statement in the mail before you get a phone call from a legitimate source, particularly if the caller is asking for a payment.
- Use caution if you are being pressured for information immediately.
- If you have a voice mail account with your phone service, be sure to set a password for it. Some voicemail services are preset to allow access if you call in from your own phone

number. A hacker could spoof your home phone number and gain access to your voice mail if you do not set a password.

- Talk to your phone company about call blocking tools and check into apps that you can download to your mobile device. The FCC allows phone companies to block robocalls by default based on reasonable analytics. More information about robocall blocking is available at [fcc.gov/robocalls](https://www.fcc.gov/robocalls).

The Town of Purcellville, Virginia

“Purcellville-your small Town, where history and progress intersect and people prosper,” is an award-winning town of over 10,000 residents located in Loudoun County, approximately 50 miles west of Washington, DC. Having received the prestigious Siemens Sustainability Award for Small Communities, Purcellville continues to be honored for its green initiatives with most recently being the Tree City USA recipient for the 12th year. The Town was reaffirmed as a AAA rated community by S&P Global Ratings, the highest credit rating possible, and is recognized as one of the safest towns in Virginia. Once a stop along the W&OD rail line, which has been converted to a multi-use trail from Alexandria, VA to Purcellville, the town has maintained its historic old-town feel through the restoration and maintenance of its many downtown structures, reflecting the Victorian architecture popular during the early 1900s. Today, Purcellville is the economic hub of western Loudoun County and a popular weekend destination for antiquing, equestrian activities, farmer’s markets, wineries, breweries, distilleries and restaurants. More info at www.purcellvilleva.gov.

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