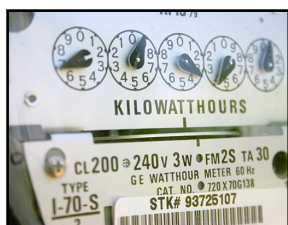


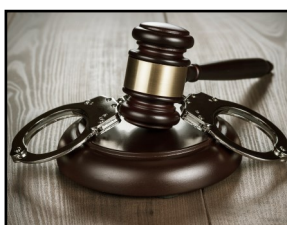
## CONSUMER FRAUD BULLETIN

January 2016

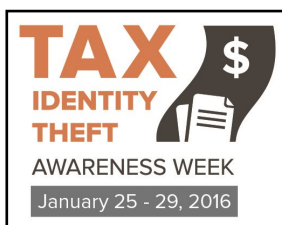
### Top Stories in this Bulletin:



[Utilities Scams](#)



[Jury Duty Scams](#)

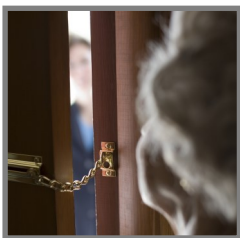


[Tax Id Theft Awareness](#)



[Sweetheart Scams](#)

### Utilities Scams Prey On Unsuspecting Victims



You receive a telephone call, email, or text message with a message from your utility company claiming that “your service is about to be shut off unless you immediately pay all past due charges!” And, they don’t want payment in a conventional way like a credit card or check, but through a pre-paid debit or gift card. Or if a “serviceman” shows up unannounced at your door and asks to come inside “to inspect your wiring, furnace, meter, etc.” Sound Suspicious? It should! These are just a few of the variety of scams where individuals impersonate utility companies in order to gain access to personal or financial information, or simply to steal from unsuspecting victims.

[Click here to learn more information.](#)

### Impersonators Threaten Victims With Arrest For Missing Jury Duty



Being selected for jury service can cause many people anxiety and stress. Unfortunately, scam artists know the added pressure associated with jury duty can make people lower their defenses and become more susceptible to fraud. Victims are caught off guard with the unexpected threat of arrest and may be quick to part with personal information or money to defuse the situation. Most jury service scams start with a phone call where the caller identifies him or herself as an officer of the court, local police department, or representative from your district attorney’s office. He/She says you have failed to report for jury duty and a warrant has been issued for your arrest. Most individuals instinctively reply they never received a notice which cues the caller to ask for personal identifying information. Some callers proceed to tell the victim they can clear your record if a fine is paid over the phone. [Click here to read the full article.](#)

### Tax Identity Theft Awareness Week is January 25—29, 2016

Tax identity theft happens when someone uses your Social Security number to get a tax refund or a job. Tax Identity Theft Awareness Week was created by the Federal Trade Commission to help educate consumers about how their personal information could be used for tax fraud. In this quick video the Internal Revenue Service warns taxpayers about an increasing number of tax scams in our communities. [Learn About Tax Identity Theft Awareness Week.](#) [Watch the IRS Tax Scams video.](#)



### Sweetheart Scams



Consumers using online dating sites to find love should remember not everyone using dating sites is looking for romance, some are looking for to scam others out of money. Thousands of people have been victimized by online romance scams and wind up not only embarrassed but with financial losses averaging more than \$10,000 per person. Shockingly, most victims are boomer age or older. Not only do victims suffer emotionally and financially, but some may have long term effects resulting from an online romance scam. [Learn more about Sweetheart Scams.](#)