



## Beware of Con Artists Impersonating Police Officers!

The Oregon Department of Justice and the Oregon State Police (OSP) are warning citizens to be on the alert for two police impersonation scams that have recently surfaced - the counterfeiting con and the unpaid traffic scam.

### **Counterfeiting Cons**

In this con, scammers call individuals at home claiming to be an officer conducting an investigation of counterfeit money. They ask you to withdraw cash so that they can "inspect" it. The bogus officer then disappears with your cash. It sounds hard to believe, but in the last few months, the Portland Police Bureau and the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office each received reports of scammers, posing as detectives, conning just two people out of more than \$50,000.

The police do not need your money to investigate a counterfeit crime ring, the Oregon State Police and the Oregon Department Justice warn. "We would never approach a citizen to assist us in an investigation of this type," said OSP spokesman Gregg Hastings.

### **Unpaid Traffic Scams**

Scammers claiming to be with the Oregon State Police are also placing pre-recorded phone calls to Oregonians telling them they owe \$154 for unpaid traffic tickets. These calls, which begin with a siren sound, are fraudulent and should be

ignored.

OSP first got word of the scam on March 26, when a citizen reported getting a call from a restricted number. An automated voice identified himself as "Alex James Murphy with the Oregon State Police." The caller stated a "bench warrant" had been issued on an unpaid speeding ticket issued on Interstate 205. The pre-recorded call gave further instructions to get a Green Dot MoneyPak reloadable debit card and place \$154 on the card, then call back another phone number with an (203) area code and provide the Green Dot MoneyPak card number and security code to pay the citation and avoid further legal action.

In November 2012, OSP received complaints from citizens regarding similar telephone calls from individuals claiming to be OSP troopers demanding money in exchange for dropping criminal charges or clearing arrest warrants. Two similar cases involved callers using titles of "Officer" and "Deputy".

OSP reminds you to be aware that:

- OSP or any other legitimate law enforcement agency does not call citizens seeking payment for outstanding traffic citations.
- OSP does not call individuals and demand money from citizens under any circumstances.
- Individuals claiming to collect debts may try to instill fear in potential victims to persuade them to forward money.

The Oregon Judicial Department advises that courts may use an independent collection service to collect unpaid monetary judgments and fines. If someone believes they are being scammed regarding an alleged unpaid traffic citation:


Ask the collector (caller) for information specific to the alleged unpaid traffic citation.

- They should have the court case number, date of ticket, vehicle license, location of violation, etc ...
- If the call receiver wants additional detail about the debt or to verify what the caller is telling them, they can call the OJD collections hotline at 1-888-564-2828.
- OJD Courts now has an online electronic payment service which allows you to pay for many types of court cases, including most traffic citations and many criminal & civil cases. (For more information go to <http://tinyurl.com/cmywx8c>).

According to Geoff Darling, Chief Investigator for the Financial Fraud Section of the Oregon Department of Justice, Green Dot MoneyPak cards and similar cash-load cards have been the focus of scammers around the country to defraud unsuspecting people. Avoid reacting to requests requiring you to purchase a MoneyPak and provide the card number via phone or by email. Treat MoneyPak cards like cash because unlike credit cards, MoneyPak transactions can never be reversed

The Green Dot Corporation is aware of similar scams and has a link on their website to tips from the Financial Fraud Enforcement Task Force ([www.StopFraud.gov](http://www.StopFraud.gov)).

Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum says "People who impersonate a police officer not only commit a serious crime but also subvert people's trust in other, genuine police officers." She urges Oregonians to contact their local Police Department, Sheriff's Office or Oregon State Police if they believe they have been contacted by one or more of these scammers. You should also call the Oregon Department of Justice at 1-877-877-9392 and request a complaint form be mailed to you or visit [www.oregonconsumer.gov](http://www.oregonconsumer.gov) to file a complaint online.

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