



St. Johns County Sheriff's Office

"Taking Care of People"

Fighting Fraud – Phone Scams

Scammers are getting more and more sophisticated in their attempts to get your money or personal details. Be alert and protect yourself from being scammed by following our advice.

Everyone's a potential target. Fraud isn't limited to race, ethnic background, gender, age, education, or income. That said, some scams seem to concentrate in certain groups. For example, older people may be targeted because the caller assumes they may live alone, have a nest egg, or may be more polite toward strangers.

Bottom line: If you get a call from someone you don't know who is trying to sell you something you hadn't planned to buy, say "no thanks" and hang up the phone. If they pressure you about giving up personal information – like your credit card or Social Security number – it's likely a scam. Hang up the phone.

Here are a few red flags to help you spot telemarketing scams. If you hear a line that sounds like this, say "no, thank you," hang up, and file a complaint with the FTC:

- *You've been specially selected (for this offer).*
- *You'll get a free bonus if you buy our product.*
- *You've won one of five valuable prizes.*
- *You've won big money in a foreign lottery.*
- *This investment is low risk and provides a higher return than you can get anywhere else.*
- *You have to make up your mind right away.*
- *You trust me, right?*
- *You don't need to check our company with anyone.*
- *We'll just put the shipping and handling charges on your credit card.*

Other ways they may try to get you is by claiming to be someone they aren't, and saying that something major has happened. For example, one scam that is popular in our area is someone pretending to be from the SJSO, telling people they missed Jury Duty and if they pay a fine, they will avoid jail. Another one is when someone pretending to be from the IRS calls and says there is a fine against the victim for tax issues. Both of these are scams, as neither the IRS nor the SJSO would call someone for either of these issues.

If it sounds unrealistic, don't hesitate to hang up and call the actual office and see if there is actually something to the call. Chances are, there isn't.

Report any scam calls here: Call 1-877-FTC-HELP or visit [ftc.gov/complaint](https://www.ftc.gov/complaint).