

# February Homeland Security Minute

Originally, this month's Security Minute was to be about House of Worship Security and Emergency Planning, but a series of telephone scams occurring in the El Paso Area caused me focus on a more immediate threat.

The FBI has reported numerous instances of phone calls to local residents from individuals claiming to be members of law enforcement. The scammer states that a criminal case has been opened against the resident and that immediate action must be taken to avoid arrest. The residents are then told that in order to avoid arrest and jail, they must pay a \$500 fine. The scammer demands payment by credit card and personal information such as social security numbers for positive identification.

This scam is a variation of the missed jury duty summons and failure to pay IRS fines cons. There are several other types that popped up from time to time.

The key thing to remember and to pass along to your family, grand kids and neighbors is that:

1. **No law enforcement agency will call you** and warn you of a pending arrest. As a Senior FBI Agent told me, "We like to knock on your door at 5 am and catch you in your pajamas. It's easier that way."
2. **No law enforcement agency will demand payment over the phone.** Local, State, and Federal law enforcement agencies just do not work that way.
3. **Should you find yourself on the receiving end of a scam, please take the time to report it to [ic3.gov](https://www.ic3.gov).**

You can use Twitter to follow El Paso FBI @FBIEIPaso to get tips on current scams. The tweet below was retweeted by El Paso FBI.



FBI SanAntonio ✓  
@FBISanAntonio

**#ScamAlert** We've received reports of a caller claiming to be #FBI Special Agent James H. Smith III demanding payment to avoid arrest. The FBI and other legitimate government agencies will never call threatening payment or arrest. [ic3.gov](https://www.ic3.gov)

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