

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**SHERIFF COPPINGER WARNS CITIZENS OF FRAUDULENT PHONE SCAM
TARGETED AT ESSEX COUNTY CITIZENS**

Sheriff Kevin F. Coppinger warns all citizens to beware of a recent telephone scam in the county. Many residents report receiving a call from an individual falsely identifying himself as "Sergeant Roberts from the Essex County Sheriff's Department." The fraudulent caller advises the citizen that they have past due legal fines that can be settled for approximately \$2,000 by giving credit card information.

"At no time would an Essex County employee ever phone people to demand fine payments," said Sheriff Coppinger, "This practice of demanding payment immediately over a phone is an obvious sign of a scam and illegal attempt to defraud."

Several residents have reported receiving these calls in the last few days. These calls have come from the phone number (978) 704-0628 and the voicemail on this line deceptively referenced the Sheriff's Office and its address. The number has since been disconnected.

In the past few months, sheriff departments in Massachusetts and New Hampshire have experienced similar scams. The Essex County Sheriff's Department will be working with other agencies to identify the caller and refer them to law enforcement for prosecution.

Anyone who receives a call similar to this is encouraged to contact their local police department and to file an online complaint with the Federal Trade Commission at www.ftc.gov.

Sheriff Coppinger cautioned, "Citizens should remember that under no circumstances should they give out personal information over the phone."

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