

NEWS ANNOUNCEMENT

Oregon State Bar

July 19, 2019:

Kateri Walsh, (503) 431-6406, or kwalsh@osbar.org

Increasing scams targeting Oregon lawyers, firms and courts.

PORTLAND, OR... Three recent scams have generated concern within legal circles. The OSB is warning its members and the public to be aware of the continuing proliferation of scams that could cause significant harm to lawyers, firms or clients.

- **Timeshare Scam.** Scammers impersonate the identity of a licensed attorney, including setting up a law firm web site and online presence in the name of an actual lawyer. A consumer checking OSB status will see that the lawyer is licensed in good standing; and then will see what appears to be a legitimate web site in that lawyer's name. The individual is then asked to provide upfront legal fees to facilitate the sale of the timeshare. More information here: https://www.doj.state.or.us/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/scam_alert_05-28-13.pdf
- **Email Phishing.** Oregon Judicial Department (OJD) email system was compromised in a phishing attack in mid-July. Exercise caution in clicking on unknown links and verify the origin of emails, even from recognized sources. More information here: https://www.osbar.org/_docs/resources/OJD-Notice-of-Phishing-Incident.pdf
- **Employment scam.** At least one Oregon firm had a job applicant who had used a national company to create a fictitious but fairly sophisticated employment history. The fabrications included fake law firm web sites to represent previous employers listed on a resume, and live people answering phones to provide the references. The firm caught the scam, but it raised concerns about client vulnerability if these scams are successful. For more information, research the growing "fake job reference" industry.

The Oregon State Bar licenses and regulates Oregon's lawyers, and administers the state's system of lawyer discipline. Additionally, the bar provides a variety of services to help the public understand and access the justice system. Finally, it offers numerous programs, including continuing legal education, to enhance the service and professionalism of its 15,000 member lawyers. For more information, see our web site at www.osbar.org. ##