



Fraud Advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 2, 2021

<https://oig.ssa.gov>

Media Inquiries: (410) 965-2671

SSA Inspector General: New Tactics for Government Imposters *Scammers use fake ID badges to impersonate employees via text messages*

The Inspector General for the Social Security Administration (SSA), Gail S. Ennis, is alerting the public about a new tactic in government imposter phone scams to deceive people into sending money or personal information.

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has received reports of phone scammers creating fake versions of the identification badges most Federal employees use to gain access to Federal buildings. The badges use government symbols, words, and even names and photos of real people, which are available on government websites or through Internet searches. The scammers may text or email photos of the fake badges to convince potential victims of their legitimacy.

Government imposter scams, most often involving Social Security number-related issues, are widespread across the United States, and scammers' tactics are sophisticated and constantly evolving. To help the public learn how to identify – and avoid – these scams, Inspector General Ennis has designated **Thursday, March 4, 2021** as National “Slam the Scam” Day, in coordination with [National Consumer Protection Week](#).

In particular, SSA will NEVER:

- text or email images of an employee's official government identification;
- suspend your Social Security number;
- threaten you with arrest or other legal action unless you immediately pay a fine or fee;
- require payment by retail gift card, wire transfer, internet currency, or mailing cash;
- promise a benefit increase or other assistance in exchange for payment; or
- send official letters or reports containing your personal information via email.

SSA only sends text messages if you have opted in to receive texts from SSA and only in limited situations, including the following:

- when you have subscribed with SSA to receive updates and notifications by text; or
- as part of SSA's enhanced security when accessing your personal *my Social Security* account.

If you owe money to Social Security, the agency will mail you a letter with payment options and appeal rights. If you receive a letter, text, call or email that you believe to be suspicious, about an alleged problem with your Social Security number, account, or payments, hang up or do not respond.

Inspector General Ennis encourages the public to report Social Security scams—or other Social Security fraud—via our website, <https://oig.ssa.gov>. Please share this information with your friends and family, and visit <https://oig.ssa.gov/slam> to read more about National “Slam the Scam” Day.

Members of the press may make inquiries to Social Security OIG at oig.communications@ssa.gov or (410) 965-2671.