



Fraud Advisory

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SSA IG Updates Warning for Social Security Phone Scams

Scammers using real officials' names to threaten arrest, demand money

The Inspector General for the Social Security Administration (SSA), Gail S. Ennis, is again warning the public about widespread Social Security-related telephone scams that may use sophisticated tactics to deceive them into providing sensitive information or money.

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has recently received reports of telephone scammers using real SSA and OIG officials' names—many of which are publicly available on our websites or through an online search. Other common tactics to lend legitimacy to scams are citing “badge numbers” of law enforcement officers, sending email attachments containing personal information about an “investigation,” or texting links to click on and “learn more” about a Social Security-related problem.

Inspector General Ennis wants you to know Social Security will **never**:

- suspend your Social Security number because someone else has used it in a crime;
- 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.

“Don’t believe anyone who calls you unsolicited from a government agency and threatens you—just hang up,” Inspector General Ennis said. “They may use real names or badge numbers to sound more official, but they are not. We will keep updating you as scam tactics evolve—because public awareness is the best weapon we have against them.”

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.

We encourage you to report Social Security scams—or other Social Security fraud—via our website, <https://oig.ssa.gov>. You may also read all previous SSA OIG **fraud advisories** on our website. Please share this information with your friends and family, to help spread awareness about Social Security scams.