

PRETEXT CALLING

Pretext Callers Defined

A pretext caller is someone who tries to steal an account holder's personal information over the phone by pretending to be the account holder or someone associated with the account holder.

Pretext callers will refuse to answer questions that will allow you to verify their identities. Instead, they will:

- Try to intimidate you.
 - Insist they are in the midst of a crisis.
 - Provide identifying information inconsistent with what you have on file.
 - Be abusive and try to distract you.
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Know Your Institution's Policies and Procedures

Three questions you should be able to answer about your institution's policy for releasing information over the phone:

- 1) What types of information am I allowed to provide over the phone?
- 2) To whom may I provide this information?
- 3) What kinds of identification will the caller have to give?

Your institution may have additional safeguards:

- Requiring security codes for accessing confidential information.
 - Limiting access to this information depending on need.
 - Limiting who can handle such calls.
 - Using computer programs that provide reminders of what to ask or that track the frequency of inquiries about each account.
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Guidelines for Handling Pretext Callers

- 1) When policy dictates that you say *no* to a request for information, explain that the purpose of the policy is to protect account holders and their assets.
- 2) If you suspect you are speaking to a pretext caller, refer the call to the appropriate person in your institution.
- 3) If you are that person, stay on the line and follow your institution's procedures for handling such calls.