

2/2021

Don't Be a Victim of Scammers

We know that helping your clients is top priority; therefore, we want to keep you up-to-date with Social Security scam information so you may provide assistance and know the steps to take in case fraud occurs.

Recently, the Inspector General for the Social Security Administration released a [Fraud Advisory](#) warning the public about widespread Social Security-related telephone scams that may use sophisticated tactics to deceive them into providing sensitive information or money. Tactics such as using real names of Social Security representatives or citing “badge numbers” of law enforcement officers in order to try and legitimize their emails and calls.

If you are contacted by a scammer, you should just hang up. Also, ignore any suspicious emails. If you do not have ongoing business with our agency, it is unlikely we will contact you. If you do receive a suspicious call claiming to be from Social Security, you should report it to our Office of Inspector General. To report a suspicious call or scam, go to <https://oig.ssa.gov/>.

There are a few ways you can identify a scam call. If you do business with us, keep in mind that we 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.

You can protect your personal information by being aware of phishing scams (emails, internet links, and phone calls) to trick you into revealing personal information and creating a [my Social Security](#) account to help you keep track of your records and identify and suspicious activity. For additional tips, check out our publication, [How You Can Help Us Protect Your Social Security Number and Keep Your Information Safe](#).

If you fall victim to a scammer, we recommend filing a report with the Federal Trade Commission, contacting the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), file a complaint with the Internet Crime Complaint Center, and monitoring your credit report. For more information, including links and phones to these agencies, read our publication, [Identity Theft and Your Social Security Number](#).

You can also post scam information at your facility by using our flyer, [Protect Yourself from Social Security Scams](#).

Remember, Social Security continues to provide service online at www.socialsecurity.gov and by phone Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. We provide all local office phone numbers conveniently on our website with our [Social Security Office Locator](#). Although we are not providing service for walk-in visitors, offices may be able to schedule an in-person appointment for limited, critical issues. To find out if your client is eligible for an in-person appointment go to: <https://www.ssa.gov/coronavirus/#home-038>.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Thank you,

Andy Hardwick

Public Affairs Specialist
Social Security Administration Area III Houston TX
214 385-3142 (cell)
andy.hardwick@ssa.gov