



COUNCIL OF THE INSPECTORS GENERAL ON INTEGRITY AND EFFICIENCY

For Immediate Release
August 17, 2022

Contact: Rebecca Rose
Press Officer
Rebeca.Rose@ssa.gov

The Inspectors General Community Stresses Warning About Scams: Criminals will Pretend to be from Any Federal Government Agency



Criminals pretending to be from federal government agencies are tricking victims into sending money or sharing personal information. Criminals will continue to try different tactics until they find one that works. No matter what these scammers say, they pressure victims to act immediately and to pay using methods that are not typical for federal government business. Criminals want payments that are quick, anonymous, and tough to reverse.

Criminals are using the names of federal government officials and sending pictures of documents, evidence, and federal employee credentials and law enforcement credentials and badges in an attempt to prove their legitimacy. They may change the picture or use a different name, agency, or badge number, but it is still a scam.

Ignore these criminals and report them.

The Inspectors General community continues to stress to the public to be cautious of calls or messages claiming to be someone from a government or law enforcement agency. Federal government employees and federal law enforcement will NOT send documents, evidence, credentials, or badges to verify their identity, nor will they demand any kind of immediate payment or personal identification.

HOW A GOVERNMENT IMPOSTER SCAM WORKS

These scams primarily use the telephone to contact you, but criminals may also use email, text message, social media, or U.S. mail. Criminals **pretend** to be from an agency or organization you know to gain your trust. Criminals say there is a **problem or a prize**. Criminals **pressure** you to act immediately. Criminals tell you to **pay** in a specific way.

TIPS TO PROTECT YOURSELF

1. **Do not take immediate action.** If you receive a communication that causes a strong emotional response, take a deep breath. Hang up or ignore the message. Talk to someone you trust.
2. **Do not transfer your money! Do not buy that gift card!** Never pay someone who insists that you pay with a gift card, prepaid debit card, Internet currency or cryptocurrency, wire transfer, money transfer, or by mailing cash. Criminals use these forms of payment because they are hard to trace.
3. **Be skeptical.** If you think a real law enforcement officer is trying to reach you, call your local law enforcement using a non-emergency number to verify. Do not believe a scammer who “transfers” your call to an official or who feeds you a number as proof. Criminals can create fake numbers and identities. Do not trust your caller ID.
4. **Be cautious** of any contact claiming to be from a government agency or law enforcement, telling you about a problem you don’t recognize. Do not provide your personal information, even if the individual has some of your personal information.
5. **Do not click on links or attachments.** Block unwanted calls and text messages.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON SCAMS

Visit the ftc.gov/scam to read about government imposter scams, and other common scams.

IF YOU ARE A VICTIM

Stop talking to the criminal. Notify financial institutions and safeguard accounts. Contact local law enforcement and file a police report. File a complaint with the FBI IC3 at www.ic3.gov and with the Federal Trade Commission at ReportFraud.FTC.gov.

Keep financial transaction information and the record of all communications with the criminal.

###

The Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) is an independent entity established within the executive branch to address integrity, economy and effectiveness issues that transcend individual government agencies and aid in the establishment of a professional, well-trained and highly skilled workforce in the Offices of Inspectors General. For more information about CIGIE and the Inspector General community, please visit <https://www.ignet.gov/>. To find and read reports from the federal Inspectors General, please visit <https://oversight.gov> and follow [@OversightGov](#) on Twitter. For information on actions by Inspectors General concerning the pandemic visit <https://www.pandemicoversight.gov/>.