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](http://ftc.gov/scam) to read about government imposter scams, and other common scams.

IF YOU ARE A VICTIM


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

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