



Office *of the* Inspector General

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Fraud Advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 2, 2012

<http://oig.ssa.gov>

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SSA Inspector General Warns Public About Phone Scheme Targeting Senior Citizens

Patrick P. O'Carroll, Jr., Inspector General for the Social Security Administration (SSA), is warning citizens about a phone scheme that has recently surfaced in California. The SSA Regional Office in San Francisco has received reports of calls made to senior citizens seeking Social Security and financial account information.

Inspector General O'Carroll urges all citizens to take precautions when giving out personal information. "You should never provide your Social Security number, bank account numbers, or other personal information unless you are extremely confident to whom you are providing the information. Social Security representatives generally will not make unsolicited calls and request personal information."

According to SSA, a 93-year-old woman received a call from an unknown person informing her of a project that involved changing a participant's Social Security number. Another caller told an elderly couple that they were going to receive new Medicare cards, and asked to "verify" the couple's bank account information.

There are many variations of this type of scheme, which could lead to bank fraud or identity theft. For more information on identity theft, please [click here](#), or contact the Federal Trade Commission at www.ftc.gov/idtheft or 1-877-ID-THEFT.

If a person has doubts about the identity of an individual who claims to be from SSA or requests personal information, the Inspector General recommends the person contact his or her local Social Security office, or call Social Security's toll-free customer service number at 1-800-772-1213, to verify the legitimacy of the employee and/or the information request. (Those who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can call Social Security's TTY number at 1-800-325-0778.)

Individuals may report suspicious activity involving Social Security programs and operations to the Social Security Fraud Hotline at <http://oig.ssa.gov/report-fraud-waste-or-abuse>, or by phone at 1-800-269-0271. (Those who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can call OIG's TTY number at 1-866-501-2101.)

For more information, please contact Jonathan Lasher, OIG's Assistant Inspector General for External Relations, at (410) 965-2671.