

SOCIAL SECURITY
ADMINISTRATION**OIG**

Legal Enforcement and Financial Penalties



The programs administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA) are critical to millions of Americans, providing retirement, disability, and survivors benefits to those who are eligible to receive them. One way the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) helps ensure the integrity of Social Security's programs is by enforcing two particular sections of the *Social Security Act* and imposing civil monetary penalties (CMPs) for violations of the law.

Section 1129—Combating Social Security Fraud

Under Section 1129, OIG may impose CMPs against individuals who, when seeking to obtain or retain Social Security benefits/payments:

- Make false statements
- Make misrepresentations
- Omit or withhold material facts
- Convert a beneficiary's benefits/payments for their own personal use, if they serve as the beneficiary's representative payee.

Section 1129 violations can be verbal or written statements made to SSA personnel; with the failure to report, there might be no SSA contact. The fraudulent actions must be committed in an effort to obtain or continue to receive Social Security benefits/payments.

Penalties

As of January 2018, the CMP statute permits penalties of up to **\$8,249** for each false statement, each material omission, or conversion of benefits. Each act and omission equals a separate violation.

OIG may impose an assessment up to **double** the overpayment, unlike the criminal area, which authorizes restitution **equal** to the amount stolen.



Section 1140—Protecting Consumers from Misleading Advertising

Section 1140 is a consumer-protection tool against misleading advertising that prohibits the use of SSA's words and symbols in a manner that conveys the false impression that SSA issued or approves the communication. Section 1140 prohibits individuals and companies from:

- Misleading consumers by giving a false impression that SSA is associated with or endorses the communication. Prohibited communications can take many forms, including mailed, emailed, and televised advertisements, websites, social media, personally targeted advertisements, mobile applications, and text messages.
- Reproducing and selling Social Security publications without authorization, as well as charging for services without notice that SSA provides them free.

Penalties

As of January 2018, the CMP statute permits penalties of up to **\$10,260** for each violation, and a penalty of not more than **\$51,302** for each misuse related to a broadcast or telecast.

How Do I Report Fraud?

Reporting is easy, safe, and secure. You can reach us by internet, phone, mail, or facsimile.

Internet: <https://oig.ssa.gov/report>

U.S. Mail: Social Security Fraud Hotline
P.O. Box 17785
Baltimore, Maryland 21235

Fax: (410) 597-0118

Telephone: 1-800-269-0271 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time

TTY: 1-866-501-2101 for the deaf or hard of hearing

Connect With Us

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YouTube: @TheSSAOIG | **Instagram:** @TheSSAOIG



Securing today
and tomorrow