

August 2017 Newsletter

Social Security Scams

Thieves will try anything to steal your money. They will even try to take your social security benefits.

The Social Security Administration has received complaints from across the United States about this scam: Posing as agents for Social Security on the telephone, one scam tries to trick you into "verifying" private information -- including your Social Security number, birth date, and parents' names. The "agent" says you have to give that information to get an annual cost-of-living increase in your SS payments.

According to a statement from Gale Stallworth Stone, Social Security's Acting Inspector General, if you do give your information to the scammer, he will contact the real Social Security Administration and use it to change your account so your checks get sent to them!

Another scam starts with a telephone call warning about problems with your Social Security benefit check. The caller will say you have been overpaid and you must immediately reimburse the government or you will go to jail. The caller will instruct you to buy pre-paid gift cards, such as Green Dot or iTunes cards, then read the numbers to them over the phone.

If Social Security does happen to over pay you, they will deduct partial repayment from future benefit checks until you have repaid the full amount.

No government agency (or legitimate business) will ask you to pay them using pre-paid cards.

Be suspicious of any caller who purports to be from a government agency, said Amy Nofziger, director of regional operations of the AARP Foundation, who works closely with AARP's Fraud Watch Network.

If you get a call from someone who claims to be from the Social Security Administration, tell them you are going to hang up and call them back. Then, hang up. Then, look up the phone number of your local Social Security office or call their toll-free headquarters number at 800-772-1213.

The Social Security Administration's Office of the Inspector General takes such scams seriously. They ask that you inform them if you get such a phone call. Call the SSA's Office of Inspector General at 800-269-0271 or online via <https://oig.ssa.gov/report>.