



Government Imposter Fraud

CONSUMER ADVISORY AND PROTECTIVE TIPS

HAPPENING IN THE DISTRICT

The Office of the District Attorney - 18th Judicial District
Proudly Serving Arapahoe, Douglas, Elbert, and Lincoln Counties

FRAUD ALERT AND ADVISORY

Government Imposter Scams have been around for a long time and are continuing to happen. Over the past year, overall numbers have gone down in the United States, yet our office regularly receives complaints and concerns from residents in our district.

Incoming solicitations from government imposters are deceitful, threatening, and sometimes believable. Similar complaints are being experienced across Colorado and our country. Scammers often pose as SSA, IRS, US Treasury, SBA, and CDC representatives. Other agencies have been used, including local courts calling you for "missing jury duty."

HERE ARE A FEW COMMON CHARACTERISTICS THAT WE ARE SEEING

- Most occurrences are experienced through incoming phone calls (robocalls and VoIP). Scammers are also reaching out by text, email, and through other channels.
- Messages often indicate a sense of urgency, are threatening, and may state that there is a warrant out for your arrest. You may be instructed to pay a fine to avoid jail time.
- Messages may state that you are in violation of a matter, that your information was used in fraudulent activity or your account has been compromised or suspended.
- A callback number is provided, which if called, an actual person (imposter) answers. These are professional scammers and part of organized crime. If you receive an email or text, then there are instructions for you to click on a link in order to resolve the matter.
- Imposters will ask you to verify some of your personal information, including your social security number (partial or full number), full name, address, financial information, etc.

- Please Note - government imposters often have fragments of your personal information from past data breaches. Breaches do occur and compromised information can float across the dark web for years. Sometimes your information (basic) is obtained by scammers through legally purchased "lead lists."
- In order to "resolve" your situation, imposters will typically instruct you to make payments through non-typical methods such as gift cards, cash, prepaid debit cards, money orders, bitcoin, i-Tune cards, etc. Our government will never ask you to make use these methods for financial payments.

A FEW BASIC TIPS

- Ignore unsolicited phone calls, texts, emails. The SSA, IRS, and other government entities will contact you through the U.S. postal system.
- If you receive a phone call, the number showing on caller ID is not the actual source of the call. Never click on links embedded in a text or email.
- Never provide sensitive personal information or financial account information, especially over an unsolicited phone call. Same with unsolicited texts and emails.
- IRS will not ask you for sensitive information by text, email, phone. SSA will not suspend your account. Neither entity or other government agencies will threaten you.
- IRS will not ask you to pay by methods mentioned above.
- If you are truly concerned about an outstanding matter, then you can contact any of these government agencies yourself. Identify the correct, secure phone number and contact the agency. You drive and control the discovery.
- Report Fraud. Contact our Consumer Fraud Protection office. We can assist you in reporting the fraud to the appropriate agencies.

The Better Business Bureau recently conducted a study on Government Imposter Fraud. The study claims that 44% of Americans have encountered a government imposter scam. The study was made available to the public in July 2020. Our office communicates with the BBB and other agencies on a regular basis as a means to identify various trends and occurrences in the region and nationally.

[Click Here - BBB Study](#)

CONTACT CONSUMER FRAUD PROTECTION
18TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Hotline (720) 874-8547 | consumer@da18.state.co.us

