



Scam Alert

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 18, 2022



Federal Law Enforcement Agencies Warn of Impersonation Scam Involving Credentials and Badges

It is illegal to reproduce Federal law enforcement credentials and badges

New reports show that scammers are reviving an old tactic to gain trust. Scammers are emailing and texting pictures of real and doctored law enforcement credentials and badges to prove they are legitimate and scam people out of money. Scammers may change the picture or use a different name, agency, or badge number, but the basic scam is the same.



Federal law enforcement agencies are warning the public to be skeptical of email and text messages claiming to be someone from a government or law enforcement agency. No one in federal law enforcement will send photographs of credentials or badges to demand any kind of payment, and neither will government employees.

Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General (OIG), Department of Labor OIG, NASA OIG, the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee (PRAC), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) joined forces to issue this scam alert.

SSA OIG spearheaded this scam alert. Members of the press may make inquiries to Social Security OIG at oig.dcom@ssa.gov or (410) 965-2671.



HOW A GOVERNMENT IMPOSTER SCAM WORKS

These scams primarily use telephone to contact you, but scammers may also use email, text message, social media, or U.S. mail. Scammers **pretend** to be from an agency or organization you know to gain your trust. Scammers say there is a **problem or a prize**. Scammers **pressure** you to act immediately. Scammers 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. Scammers 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 scammers who “transfer” your call to an official or who feed you a number as proof. Scammers 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 caller has some of your 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](https://www.ftc.gov/scam) to read about common scams.

IF YOU ARE A VICTIM

Stop talking to the scammer. Notify financial institutions and safeguard accounts. Contact local law enforcement and file a police report. File a complaint with the FBI IC3 at www.ic3.gov and with the Federal Trade Commission at [ReportFraud.FTC.gov](https://www.ReportFraud.FTC.gov).

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

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