**Social Security Column**

SOCIAL SECURITY AND SCAM AWARENESS

****

Social Security imposter scams continue to be widespread across the United States. Scammers use tactics to deceive you into providing sensitive information or money. If you receive a suspicious letter, text, email, or call, do not respond.

We will NEVER:

* Text or email images of an employee’s official government identification.
* Suspend your Social Security number.

Threaten you with arrest or other legal action unless you immediately pay a fine or fee.

* Require payment by retail gift card, wire transfer, internet currency, or cash by mail.

Promise a benefit increase or other assistance in exchange for payment.

Mail or email “official” letters or reports containing your personal information.

We only send text messages in limited situations, including:

* When you have subscribed to receive updates and notifications by text.
* As part of our enhanced security when accessing your personal *my* Social Securityaccount.

If you owe money to us, we will mail you a letter with payment options and appeal rights. Social Security employees do contact the public by telephone for business purposes. Ordinarily, the agency calls people who have recently applied for a Social Security benefit, are already receiving payments and require an update to their record or have requested a phone call from the agency. If there is a problem with a person's Social Security number or record, Social Security will typically mail a letter.

We encourage you to report suspected Social Security imposter scams — and other Social Security fraud — to the OIG’s website at [oig.ssa.gov/report](https://oig.ssa.gov/report/). You can find more information about scams at [www.ssa.gov/scam](https://www.ssa.gov/scam). Please share this information with your friends, family, and colleagues to help spread awareness about Social Security imposter scams.

# # #