

## Social Security Column

### SOCIAL SECURITY INFORMING YOU ABOUT RECENT SCAMS

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The most effective way to defeat scammers is to know how to identify scams. You should just **hang up** on any call you're uncertain of and ignore suspicious emails. Scammers are always finding new ways to steal your money and personal information by exploiting your fears.

One common tactic scammers use is posing as federal agents and other law enforcement. They may claim your Social Security number is linked to a crime. They may even threaten to arrest you if you do not comply with their instructions. Just **hang up**.

As a reminder, you should continue to remain vigilant of phone calls when someone says there's a problem with your Social Security number or your benefits. If you owe money to Social Security, we will mail you a letter explaining your rights, payment options, and information about appealing.

There are a few ways you can identify a scam call. If you do business with us, remember that we will never:

- Threaten you with benefit suspension, arrest, or other legal action unless you pay a fine or fee.
- Promise a benefit increase or other assistance in exchange for payment.
- Require payment by retail gift card, cash, wire transfer, internet currency, or prepaid debit card.
- Demand secrecy from you in handling a Social Security-related problem.
- Send official letters or reports containing personally identifiable information via email.

If you do not have ongoing business with our agency, it is unlikely we will contact you. If you get a suspicious call claiming to be from Social Security, you should **hang up** and report it to our law enforcement office at [oig.ssa.gov](https://oig.ssa.gov).

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