



Office *of the* Inspector General

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

## Fraud Advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 17, 2015

<http://oig.ssa.gov>

Contact: Tracy Lyngge

Phone: (410) 965-2671

### **Inspector General Warns Public about Direct Express® Debit MasterCard® Phishing Scam**

Patrick P. O’Carroll, Jr., Inspector General for the Social Security Administration (SSA), is warning the public about a telephone phishing scheme involving the Direct Express® Debit MasterCard®. The Direct Express® card is a prepaid debit card offered to Social Security and Supplemental Security Income recipients who wish to receive their benefits electronically.

We have recently received reports that some individuals have received a phone call with a prerecorded message claiming that the individual’s Direct Express® card has been deactivated. The individual is then asked to press the number 1 and then enter his or her Social Security number. In some cases, the caller ID has shown the number 315 with no other digits.

Inspector General O’Carroll urges you to be aware that Comerica Bank, the company that issues Direct Express® cards, will never call you and request this information in this manner. Moreover, you should always take precautions when asked to provide personal information. “You should never provide your Social Security number, bank account numbers, or other personal information unless you are extremely confident about the identity of the requestor,” said Mr. O’Carroll.

Please be aware that there are many variations of this type of scheme, which could lead to identity theft or Social Security benefit theft. For more information on identity theft, please [click here](#). You may also contact the Federal Trade Commission at [www.identitytheft.gov](http://www.identitytheft.gov) or 1-877-ID-THEFT for additional information or to report identity theft.

If you receive a text message, e-mail, or phone call from anyone claiming to be from a government agency and requesting personal information, Mr. O’Carroll recommends that you contact the agency directly to verify the request. For the Social Security Administration, you may contact your local Social Security office, or call Social Security’s toll-free customer service number at (800) 772-1213, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday, to verify the employee’s identity and the information request. (Those who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can call Social Security’s TTY number at (800) 325-0778.)

For questions related to the Direct Express card, cardholders should call (888) 741-1115 (deaf and hard-of-hearing cardholders should use (866) 569-0447).

Also, you may report suspicious activity involving Social Security programs and operations to the Social Security Fraud Hotline at <http://oig.ssa.gov/report>, or by phone at (800) 269-0271, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (those who are deaf or hard-of-hearing may call TTY (866) 501-2101.)

*For more information, please contact Tracy Lyngge, OIG Communications Director, at (410) 965-2671.*