



Office of the Inspector General

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

## Fraud Advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 7, 2018

<https://oig.ssa.gov>

### **IG Warns Public About Fraudulent Phone Calls Threatening Arrest or Legal Action**

The Acting Inspector General of Social Security, Gale Stallworth Stone, is urging citizens to remain vigilant of telephone impersonation schemes that exploit the Social Security Administration's (SSA) reputation and authority.

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) continues to receive reports from across the country about fraudulent phone calls from people claiming to be from SSA. Recent reports have indicated that unknown callers are using increasingly threatening language in these calls. The callers state, due to improper or illegal activity with a citizen's Social Security number (SSN) or account, a citizen will be arrested or face other legal action if they fail to call a provided phone number to address the issue. This is a scam; citizens should not engage with these calls or provide any personal information.

SSA employees do contact citizens, generally those who have ongoing business with SSA, by telephone for customer-service purposes. However, SSA employees will never threaten you for information; they will not state that you face potential arrest or other legal action if you fail to provide information. In those cases, the call is fraudulent, and you should just hang up.

"Unfortunately, scammers will try anything to mislead and harm innocent people, including scaring them into thinking that something is wrong with their Social Security account and they might be arrested," Stone said. "I encourage everyone to remain watchful of these schemes and to alert family members and friends of their prevalence. We will continue to track these scams and warn citizens, so that they can stay several steps ahead of these thieves."

The OIG recently warned that some of these impersonation calls have "spoofed" SSA's national customer service phone number, displaying 1-800-772-1213 as the incoming number on caller ID.

The Acting Inspector General urges citizens to be extremely cautious, and to avoid providing information such as your SSN or bank account numbers to unknown persons over the phone or internet unless you are certain of who is receiving it. If you receive a suspicious call from someone alleging to be from SSA, you should report that information to the OIG online at <https://oig.ssa.gov>.

*For more information, please visit <https://oig.ssa.gov/newsroom/scam-awareness>. For media inquiries, please contact Andrew Cannarsa, OIG's Communications Director, at (410) 965-2671.*