

New Social Security Scam Making the Rounds

Callers pose as Social Security Administration employees

by Shelley Emling, **AARP**, July 24, 2017|Comments: 7

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Warning, the SSA will not ask for personal information over the phone.

Financial scams involving people pretending to be government employees aren't restricted only to those Internal Revenue Service **phone schemes** so prevalent in recent years. Now there's a new scam making the rounds, one in which criminals try to defraud people out of their Social Security checks.

Gale Stallworth Stone, the acting inspector general of Social Security, is **warning citizens about a scheme** that goes like this: Someone posing as a Social Security Administration (SSA) employee calls from a phone number with a 323 area code. In some cases, the swindler tells victims they are due a 1.7 percent cost-of-living adjustment increase in their Social Security benefits .

Americans have lost an estimated \$1.5 billion to scammers posing as tech company employees, but no matter what tactic they use, scammers have one purpose -- to take your money.

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The impersonator then asks the victim to verify all of his or her **personal information**, including name, date of birth and Social Security number, in order to receive the increase. If the impostor is able to acquire this data, the

person can use it to contact the SSA and request changes to the victim's direct deposit, address and phone information.

According to the warning, the SSA will sometimes reach out to citizens by phone for customer service purposes, but the agency's reps will not ask for personal information this way. Anyone who receives a suspicious call is encouraged to report it to the Office of the Inspector General at 1-800-269-0271 or online via <https://oig.ssa.gov/report>.

The SSA also operates a toll-free customer service number for anyone with questions or concerns (1-800-772-1213), which can be contacted from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. (Those who are deaf or hard of hearing can call Social Security at 1-800-325-0778.)

You can also stay on top of con artists' latest tricks by signing up for [AARP's free Watchdog Alerts](#).

Stone continues to warn citizens to be cautious and to avoid providing information such as SSN and bank account numbers to unknown individuals over the phone or the internet unless they are absolutely certain of who is receiving these personal details.

"You must be very confident that the source is the correct business party and your information will be secure after you release it," Stone said.

Another scam that continues to prey on older people involves [calls from or about a grandchild](#) in trouble. If anyone phones you claiming to be your grandkid, or someone who knows your grandkid, and requests cash, hang up and consult with another family member first. Chances are, you just saved yourself from becoming a victim.