

Warning



FRAUD ADVISORY: INSPECTOR GENERAL WARNS PUBLIC ABOUT "DISABILITY SERVICES" PHONE CALLS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 29, 2016

Social Security Inspector General Patrick P. O’Carroll is warning citizens to be aware of phone calls from unknown people who claim to have information about a citizen’s application for disability benefits and offer assistance with the citizen’s claim. The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) received a report from a Maryland citizen who recently received several of these phone calls, even though the citizen had not applied for disability benefits.

The callers appear to be “phishing” for personal information—such as Social Security numbers or personal financial information—from unknowing citizens, who possibly have applied for disability benefits and thus might be inclined to provide information to the caller in furtherance of his or her claim. One person, who had not applied for disability benefits, reported recently receiving three unsolicited calls from a caller named Scott from a phone number with a 301 area code.

There are several variations of this type of phone phishing scam, which could lead to identity theft and/or government benefit theft. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) recently warned of [similar phone calls from people impersonating IRS agents](#) who request information to process a citizen’s tax return.

Therefore, Inspector General O’Carroll urges you to remain vigilant and protect your personal information. O’Carroll states, “You should never provide your Social Security number, bank account numbers, or other personal information by telephone or over the Internet unless you are extremely confident of the source to which you are providing the information.”

If you have questions about any communication—phone call, email, letter, or text—that claims to be from or have a connection to the Social Security Administration, O’Carroll recommends you contact your local Social Security office, or call Social Security’s toll-free customer service number at **1-800-772-1213**, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday, to verify its legitimacy. (Those who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can call Social Security’s TTY number at 1-800-325-0778.)

You may report suspicious activity or communications involving Social Security programs and operations to the Social Security Fraud Hotline at <https://oig.ssa.gov/report>, or by phone at 1-800-269-0271, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday. (Those who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can call the OIG TTY number at 1-866-501-2101.)