



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Department of Homeland Security

Washington, DC 20528 / www.oig.dhs.gov

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FRAUD ALERT: Department of Homeland Security Impersonation Schemes

This U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG) Public Service Announcement highlights how scammers impersonating DHS personnel defraud the public and how to avoid becoming another victim.

Background

Each year, DHS OIG receives hundreds of reports of individuals impersonating DHS employees to defraud the public. Impersonators can spoof actual DHS phone numbers and create email addresses that resemble DHS email addresses in their attempts appear legitimate. Some will even email or text pictures of real and doctored law enforcement credentials. These impersonators will try to convince targets to provide personally identifiable information, passwords, credit card or bank numbers, or payment via money transfer services or prepaid debit cards.

Recent Trends

Many reports to DHS OIG are related to the targeting of immigrants, minority groups or people with foreign ties. The most common ruses are:

- Violations of immigration or customs laws,
- Lost or duplicate passports used abroad to commit crimes,
- Unspecified “Green Cards matters,”
- Packages detained at the border containing drugs or other illegal materials, and
- Problems with the victim’s immigration forms.

Imposters may threaten with arrest, cancellation of visas, or deportation if they do not comply.

Protect Yourself

1. Be suspicious of telephone calls or emails claiming to be from DHS as scammers can fake caller ID information and email addresses. All legitimate government emails will come from an email address ending in .gov.
2. Scammers often use incorrect nomenclature to identify themselves, such as “DHS agent,” “DHS private investigator” or “Detective with DHS.” They may misuse



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- acronyms or government agencies' names such as "Department of Customs and Border Security," or "US Immigration Agency."
3. DHS never use the contact numbers listed on its website to make outgoing calls of this nature. Individuals receiving phone calls from these numbers should not provide any personal information.
 4. Do not send money or gift cards to persons claiming to be from DHS. DHS employees will never ask you to pay a fine over the phone, and will never accept payment for fees through Google Play, Apple, gift cards, or money transfer services such as Zelle or Venmo.

Reporting Fraud

Anyone who believes they may have been a victim is urged to call the DHS OIG Hotline (1-800-323-8603) or file a complaint online via the DHS OIG website www.oig.dhs.gov. Internet crime victims can file a complaint at www.ic3.gov and with the Federal Trade Commission.

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