



# Fraud Advisory

Social Security Administration  
Office of the Inspector General

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[www.socialsecurity.gov/oig](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/oig)

Contact: Tracy Lyng  
Phone: (410) 965-9736  
Fax: (410) 966-7075

## **Social Security Inspector General Warns Public about Telemarketing Fraud in Wisconsin**

Patrick P. O'Carroll, Jr., Inspector General of Social Security, is warning citizens about a fraudulent "telemarketing" scheme that has surfaced across the United States, including recently in Wisconsin. The Social Security Administration (SSA) office in Racine has received reports of telephone calls in which people falsely claim to be Social Security employees to obtain personal information from Social Security beneficiaries.

Inspector General O'Carroll urges all citizens to take precautions when giving out personal information over the telephone or the Internet. "You should never provide your Social Security number, bank account numbers, or other personal information over the Internet or by telephone unless you are extremely confident of the source to whom you are providing the information."

As in other areas of the country, the Wisconsin scheme has several variations. Some callers tell beneficiaries they need bank account information for direct deposit of the upcoming stimulus tax rebate. In other versions, callers have asked for personal information to update Medicare records, or to "verify" future entitlement to Social Security benefits or direct deposit of benefits. In addition, callers may become hostile or call repeatedly if individuals refuse to divulge information.

"That unscrupulous individuals would use the Social Security Administration's name and reputation to take advantage of those who rely on our benefits for their well-being is an outrage," said Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security.

If a person has questions about someone who claims to be a Social Security representative, O'Carroll recommends contacting his or her local Social Security office, or calling Social Security's toll-free customer service number at **1-800-772-1213**, to verify the legitimacy of the employee and the call. (Those who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can call Social Security's TTY number at 1-800-325-0778.)

Individuals may report suspicious activity involving Social Security programs and operations to the Social Security Fraud Hotline at <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/oig/hotline/>, or by phone at 1-800-269-0271. (Those who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can call the OIG TTY number at 1-866-501-2101.)