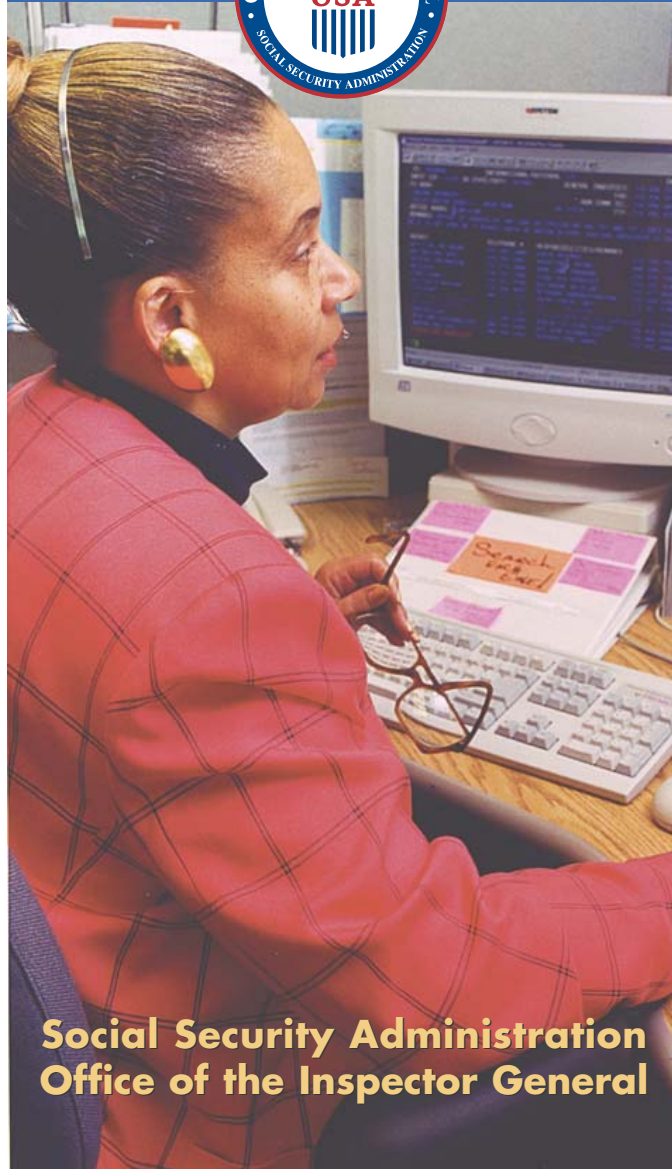


Social Security Administration
Office of the Inspector General
OIG Fraud Hotline
P.O. Box 17768
Baltimore, MD 21235-7768

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

Fraud Hotline

1-800-269-0271



**Social Security Administration
Office of the Inspector General**

How to Report Fraud

Social Security's Office of the Inspector General (OIG) Fraud Hotline offers a convenient way for you to report suspected fraud, waste, and abuse in SSA programs and operations. For more information, please visit our website and see our guidelines on reporting fraud.

Office of the Inspector General Fraud Hotline

Call: 1-800-269-0271

Fax: 410-597-0118

Mail: Social Security Administration
Office of the Inspector General
Attention: OIG Fraud Hotline
P. O. Box 17768
Baltimore, MD 21235-7768

**You may report fraud at our
website: www.ssa.gov/oig**



SSA Pub. No. 85-004
February 2003

What YOU Should Know & What YOU Should Do

OIG investigates allegations regarding violations of law or regulations that affect SSA programs. This brochure tells how you can send an allegation to our Fraud Hotline and what information you should include in your allegation. It also discusses Social Security number (SSN) misuse, identity theft, and representative payee misuse.



Examples of fraud in SSA programs include:

- Criminal activity, such as false statements on benefit claims forms, concealment of material facts or events that affect eligibility for benefits, or misuse of benefits by a representative payee.
- Conflict of interest.
- Fraud or misuse of grant or contracting funds.
- Standards of conduct violations.
- SSN allegations relating to terrorist groups or activities.



How to Report Fraud

When making an allegation of fraud regarding Social Security Programs, you should provide as much identifying information as possible regarding the allegation. Your information should include: suspect's name, SSN, date of birth, address, and details regarding the allegation, such as when it happened, how it was committed, and where it took place.

Frequently Asked Questions About Social Security Number Misuse and Identity Theft

Someone is using my Social Security Number. What can I do to protect myself?

SSA cannot fix your credit record if someone has misused your SSN to obtain credit. To resolve your credit problems, contact the institution that authorized the credit and/or issued the credit card, as well as the major credit reporting agencies. SSN misuse can constitute identity theft.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) collects complaints from victims of identity theft. Although the FTC does not have the authority to bring criminal cases, the Commission can provide information to help victims resolve financial and

other problems that can result from this crime. The FTC puts your information into a secure consumer fraud database and may, in appropriate instances, share it with other law enforcement agencies and private entities, including any companies with whom you may have a complaint. The FTC will provide you with an ID Theft Affidavit. It has two parts:

- (1) A complaint form with general information about yourself and the theft.
- (2) A fraudulent account statement to describe the accounts opened in your name.

You may file a complaint with the FTC online at www.consumer.gov/idtheft or you may call the FTC's ID Theft Hotline toll-free at 1-877-IDTHEFT or 1-877-438-4338. The FTC can also be reached through its website at www.ftc.gov.

What should I do if my wallet containing my Social Security card is lost or stolen?

SSA's OIG does not investigate the loss or theft of personal property, including wallets or purses containing personal identification. If your wallet or purse containing your Social Security card is stolen, contact your local police department immediately to file a theft report. You can also contact SSA directly at 1-800-772-1213 to request a replacement card.

Can SSA's OIG place a fraud alert on my Social Security Number?

No. SSA's OIG cannot place a fraud alert on your SSN. If you discover that you are an identity theft victim, you should contact the fraud department of the three major credit bureaus and request that a fraud alert be placed in your file. You should also provide the credit bureaus with a written statement asking that creditors contact you before opening any new accounts or changing existing accounts. This can prevent an identity thief from opening additional accounts in your name.

What types of Social Security Number allegations should I report?

The OIG Fraud Hotline will accept SSN misuse allegations that involve the following:

- Buying and selling of counterfeit or legitimate SSN cards.
- Misuse involving people with links to terrorist groups or activities.
- Misuse of an SSN by someone else to obtain program benefits.

Representative Payee Misuse

Some individuals who receive Social Security benefits are not able to handle their own financial affairs. In these cases, and after careful investigation, SSA appoints a relative, a friend, or an organization, such as a nursing home, to handle the individual's Social Security matters. That person is called a representative payee.

A representative payee is required by law to use benefits properly. A representative payee must apply the benefits for the use and care of the entitled individual. The benefits should be spent on the beneficiary's current and reasonably foreseeable needs. Benefits can also be used to pay for medical needs or for care in a residential institution.

To report potential representative payee violations and/or misuse of benefits, contact the OIG Fraud Hotline. When processing your allegation, provide as much identifying information as possible regarding the suspect representative payee. Important information includes the following:

- Name and SSN of the representative payee and the beneficiary, if known.
- Date of birth of the representative payee and the beneficiary.
- Details regarding the allegation, such as when it happened, how the abuse was committed, and where it took place.

OIG Disclosure Policy

How can I find out about the status of my allegation?

We cannot provide information about the status of your allegation or what action we have taken on any allegation reported to our office. Federal regulations and criminal and civil sanctions under the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 522a) prohibit the disclosure of information contained in law enforcement records, even to the individual making the allegation. This protects the integrity of our investigations, as well as the reputations of innocent individuals who may be involved.

Once we receive the information you provide, we will respond with a letter of acknowledgment, but do not expect any further communication from the OIG.

PRIVACY ACT NOTICE

The information you submit will be used mainly for investigations into fraud, waste, and abuse in connection with the programs and operations of SSA, as explained above. We may disclose information you submit to other Federal and State law enforcement agencies if we believe you have alleged a criminal or civil violation in their jurisdiction. We will refer all allegations of identity theft to the Federal Trade Commission. We may refer your allegation to SSA if we believe it can be addressed through administrative action (for instance, if you allege a simple mistake in the computation of your benefit amount).

