

PUBLIC ADVISORY: Law Enforcement Imposter Scams

The Boston Police Department would like to inform the public of an increase in scammers impersonating law enforcement officers (local, federal, international) or court officials to elicit funds from frightened victims. Scammers will claim that victims have a warrant for their arrest or will threaten them with jail time if victims do not immediately pay. Another version of this scam is where bad actors pretend to be court officials and that victims need to pay a penalty for missing jury duty. Scammers have also used these tactics to target immigrant & foreign student populations, claiming to be from immigration services or country of origin law enforcement and that there is an issue with their visa which can only be resolved with payment.

These scams are typically conducted via phone calls where scammers provide victims with credentials (case numbers, badge numbers) to make them appear more credible. They often use names and IDs of real law enforcement officers. Scammers have also spoofed legitimate law enforcement phone numbers. The caller will insist money is required immediately from victims through wire payments, banking information, gift cards, cryptocurrency transfers, and more recently instructed to purchase gold bars.¹²

Imposter scams can also include the impersonation of bank employees, Medicare, IRS, Social Security Administration officers, Federal Trade Commission and many more.

How to Avoid Law Enforcement Imposter Scams:

DO NOT send money. Don't wire money or send gift cards, cryptocurrency or use a payment app to pay someone who claims to be with a government agency.

DO NOT give your financial or personal information to someone who calls, texts, emails, or messages you claiming to be with a government agency. Hang up the phone and call the legitimate agency directly at a number you know is correct to verify any information. If contacted by a robocall, do not press any numbers. Pressing numbers could lead to more calls.

DO NOT trust your caller ID. Caller IDs can be faked. Your caller ID might show the impersonated agency's real phone number or name, when it could be anyone calling from anywhere in the world.

DO NOT click on links in unexpected emails, texts or social media messages. Scammers send emails and messages that look like they're from a legitimate agency but are designed to steal your money and personal information. Don't click on any link, and don't pass it on to others. Just delete the message.

Resources & Reporting

If you have paid scammers, there are some actions you can take to protect yourself from further issues and potentially get money back. Follow the QR Code for "What to Do if You were Scammed" for steps to take.

Victims are encouraged to file a police report with their local area station. Please follow the QR Code below to find your local Boston area station.



If the scammers obtained your Social Security number, go to IdentityTheft.gov with the below QR Code.



For additional reporting victims can also file with the **Federal Trade Commission (FTC)** by following the below QR code.



What to Do if You Were Scammed



¹ <https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/how-avoid-government-impersonation-scam#whattoknow>

² <https://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/info-2024/gold-bars.html>

³ <https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/how-avoid-government-impersonation-scam#whattoknow>