



News Release

SOCIAL SECURITY

Public Warned about Identity Theft E-mail Scam

Jo Anne Barnhart, Commissioner of Social Security, and Patrick O'Carroll, Jr., Inspector General of Social Security, issued a warning today about a new email scam that has surfaced recently.

The Agency has received several reports of an email message being circulated addressed to "*Dear Social Security Number And Card owner*" and purporting to be from the Social Security Administration. The message informs the reader "*that someone illegally is using your Social Security number and assuming your identity*" and directs the reader to a website designed to look like Social Security's Internet website.

"I am outraged that someone would target an unsuspecting public in this manner," said Commissioner Barnhart. "I have asked the Inspector General to use all the resources at his command to find and prosecute whoever is perpetrating this fraud."

Once directed to the phony website, the individual is asked to confirm their identity with "*Social Security and bank information.*" Specific information about the individual's credit card number, expiration date and PIN number is then requested. "Whether on our online website or by phone, Social Security will never ask you for your credit card information or your PIN number," Commissioner Barnhart said.

Inspector General O'Carroll recommends people always take precautions when giving out personal information. "You should never provide your Social Security number 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," O'Carroll said.

To report receipt of this email message or other suspicious activity to Social Security's Office of Inspector General, please call the OIG Hotline at 1-800-269-0271. (If you are deaf or hard of hearing, call the OIG TTY number at 1-866-501-2101). A Public Fraud Reporting form is also available online at OIG's website www.socialsecurity.gov/oig.