

Consumer Banking Newsletter

Government Imposter Scams

Government imposter scams have been the top-reported form of fraud since 2014, resulting in over \$450 million in losses. These scams occur when criminals impersonate employees from the IRS, FBI or Social Security Administration (among other organizations) and contact unsuspecting victims, using aggressive tactics to trick the victim into sending money or sharing personal and/or account information.

How To Spot an Imposter

There are a wide variety of stories that scammers will tell in order to trick you into believing they're working on behalf of a government entity; from threatening a lawsuit for unpaid taxes to saying that you will be arrested if you do not pay a fine immediately. While these types of crime show no signs of stopping, there are a few items you can pay close attention to in order to verify if the person is legitimate.

- ❖ **Form of contact.** Most agencies will contact you via mail, not email, text or phone calls.
- ❖ **Payment method.** Legitimate government agencies will not require a specific form of payment such as a wire transfers and they will never ask for pre-paid debit cards or gift cards.
- ❖ **Payment for collecting grant money.** If you are the recipient of a legitimate government grant, you will not be asked to pre-pay for insurance, taxes or shipping charges in order to collect your funds.
- ❖ **Caller ID.** Do not trust the name & number that show up on Caller ID. It is very easy for a criminal to disguise their phone number and even manipulate the information that shows up on caller ID.

If you are contacted by a government agency and you believe it may be legitimate, simply hang up and call them back using a known number. They will verify whether the call was real.



Online Security

One of the easiest ways to protect your bank account(s) online is by making sure that your devices are up-to-date. Delaying operating system & software updates can leave your computer or mobile device vulnerable to viruses & cyber criminals.



Holiday Hours

All Haverhill Bank branches will be closed on **Monday September 2nd** in observance of Labor Day and will resume regular business hours on Tuesday September 3rd.

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