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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Imposter Scammers Use Spoofing to Steal SSNs



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody is issuing a Consumer Alert about a new twist on an old scam. Impersonating the Internal Revenue Service is a longstanding tactic used by scammers trying to coerce people to send money or provide sensitive financial information. Now, scammers are using robocalls and spoofing to impersonate the Social Security Administration to trick people into giving up Social Security numbers. The Federal Trade Commission reports a rise in the number of SSA imposter scams while IRS imposter scam reports are on the decline.

Both scams use a tactic called spoofing to disguise the number displayed on a target's caller ID. The SSA scam uses spoofing and claims a target's SSN is stolen or linked to criminal activity. The target is then asked to verify the number. If the target complies, the scammer records the SSN to sell on the dark web or use to open fraudulent financial accounts.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "Scammers are using technology and tricks to steal your Social Security number. Never provide your SSN in response to a solicitation and don't trust your caller ID. If you receive one of these calls, hang up the phone immediately and call my office at 1(866) 9NO-SCAM."

To avoid SSA imposter scams:

· Beware of phone numbers listed on caller ID. Spoofing allows scammers to change the information displayed on caller ID to give the appearance that the call is coming from a government entity;

· Do not answer any call seeming to originate from the SSA's Fraud Hotline number, 1(800) 269-0271. This number is never used to make outgoing calls;
· Know that any solicitor claiming that a SSN is about to be suspended or bank accounts will be seized is lying;
· Never provide a SSN, financial account numbers or any other personal information in response to a solicitation;
· Always ask the requester how identifying information will be used, stored and kept secure;
· Know that the IRS, SSA, law enforcement agencies and financial institutions will never call and demand wiring of money or payment by prepaid debit card; and
· Just hang up. Then call the government entity at the phone number listed on an official government website to confirm the authenticity of the call.

Anyone who receives a suspicious call or solicitation should report the incident to the Florida Attorney General's Office by filing a complaint online at MyFloridaLegal.com or by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM.

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The Florida Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division issues Consumer Alerts to inform Floridians of emerging scams, new methods used to commit fraud, increased reports of common scams, or any other deceptive practice. Consumer Alerts are designed to notify Floridians about scams and available refunds in an effort to prevent financial losses or other harm caused by deceptive practices. Anyone encountering a scam should report the incident to the Florida Attorney General's Office by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or visiting MyFloridaLegal.com.