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FEDERAL FAKES

The [Federal Inspectors General](#) is warning that criminals pretending to be from federal government agencies are tricking victims into sending money or sharing personal information. To prove their legitimacy, crooks are using real names of government officials, and sending fake credentials, documents, even law enforcement badges!

No matter what these scammers say, they pressure victims to act immediately and to pay using methods that are not typical for federal government business. Criminals want payments that are quick, anonymous, and tough to reverse.

How it Works:

These scams primarily use the telephone to contact you, but criminals may also use email, text message, social media, or U.S. mail. Criminals pretend to be from an agency or organization you know to gain your trust. They'll say there's a problem or offer a prize, then pressure you to take immediate action. Payment is sought via gift cards, prepaid debit card, internet currency or cryptocurrency, wire transfer, payment apps, or mailing cash. Criminals use these forms of payment because they are hard to trace.

Tips to Protect Yourself:

- Don't Act Immediately:** Stop, get advice.
- Don't Transfer Money:** Confirm the story
- Be Skeptical, Cautious:** Caller ID, docs, photos, credentials, and badges can all be fake.
- Don't Click Unsolicited Links:** Period.

For more information visit ftc.gov/scam and report attempts to the FBI at ic3.gov.
*SSA, IGMET.gov

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Crooks Going Postal



A clever scheme is making the rounds where scammers [impersonate the U.S. Postal Service \(USPS\)](#). Text messages appearing to be from the USPS that offer helpful info like confirming a delivery address, are followed by a link for tracking information. The message is very convincing and looks official. So many people won't think twice about clicking the link. That leads to criminals trying to get your personal info like SSN, DOB, banking, credit card, and account login info. That info is then used to steal your identity and carry out other crimes like financial fraud.

The Postal Service does offer tools to help track specific packages, but customers are required to register online, or send a text message directly to the USPS that includes a tracking number. USPS will not send customers text messages or e-mails without a customer first requesting the service, and it will NOT contain a link.

So, if you did not initiate the tracking request for a specific package directly from USPS and it contains a link: don't click, it's a scam. To learn more about USPS text scams check out their helpful YouTube video [HERE](#).

For more information about the legitimate USPS tracking services visit [USPS TEXT TRACKING](#). To protect yourself and others from consumer frauds, visit their [fraud prevention page](#).
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FLORIDA PRICE GOUGING APP



Hurricane season hits its peak this month and Attorney General Ashley Moody highlighted the availability of the "No Scam Price Gouging App" in both English and Spanish. The new app allows consumers to report suspected price gouging typically seen before and after a natural disaster or state emergency, directly to the AG's office in real time. The app also offers the ability to attach photos and copies of receipts directly from a mobile device.

Price gouging is a [crime in Florida](#) and happens when anyone unjustifiably increases the cost of essential commodities in advance of, or after a declared emergency.

In addition to being used to report price gouging during states of emergency related to hurricanes, No Scam has been continually updated for use during other states of emergency—most notably the health state of emergency declared last year for the COVID-19 pandemic. Consumers were able to report outrageous price increases on essential commodities related to COVID-19 via the app

For tips on how to better report price gouging, read the Attorney General's [Tips for Avoiding Price Gouging and Gathering Gouging Evidence](#).

To learn more about price gouging visit the [website of the Florida Attorney General](#). You can also download the 2022 Hurricane Preparedness Guide in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

No Scam Price Gouging Reporting App can be downloaded for free through Apple and Android stores by searching "No Scam".
*MyFloridaLegal.com