



The Los Angeles County Department of Consumer and Business Affairs is advising L.A. County residents to be on the lookout for possible government imposter scams.

As we approach the Presidential election and with the holidays and tax season to follow, DCBA investigators have noticed an increase in possible scams in which consumers receive a letter, email, phone call, or other communication that appears to be from a legitimate government agency.

Our department recently was informed that a consumer received a phony email which included an altered real-life DCBA letter designed to get the recipient to reply to a non-DCBA email account.

Government imposter scams often consist of phony messages that use official sounding names, similar to real government agencies, and sometimes resemble legitimate government communications to trick consumers into giving up personal or financial information. These scammers will sometimes ask or even demand that a consumer click a link or contact them under a false deadline to pay them money.

Here are some tips from the Federal Trade Commission for avoiding [government imposter scams](#):

Don't trust a name or number

Con artists use official-sounding names to make you trust them. It's illegal for someone to lie about an affiliation with — or an endorsement by — a government agency or any other well-known organization. No matter how convincing their story — or their stationery — they're usually trying to scam you out of your money.

Don't give your financial or other personal information

Never give out or confirm financial or other sensitive information, including your bank account, credit card, or Social Security number, unless you know who you're dealing with. Scam artists, like fake debt collectors, can use your information to commit identity theft — charging your existing credit cards, opening new credit card, checking, or savings accounts, writing fraudulent checks, or taking out loans in your name.

Don't send cash or wire funds

Scammers often pressure people into wiring money, or strongly suggest that people put money on a prepaid debit card or gift card and send it to them. Why? It's like sending cash: once it's gone, you can't trace it or get it back.

Report the scam

If you believe you have been targeted by a government imposter scam, please contact the Los Angeles County Department of Consumer and Business Affairs at **(800) 593-8222**.

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