

PRESS RELEASE



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For Immediate Release

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*******CONSUMER ALERT*****CONSUMER ALERT*******

MADIGAN WARNS CONSUMER ABOUT NEW E-MAIL IDENTITY THEFT SCAM

Chicago – With a new scam requesting consumers’ personal and financial information popping up in e-mail inboxes, Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan today warned consumers not to give out their Social Security information or bank account numbers if they receive this unsolicited email.

Madigan’s Consumer Protection Division has received reports from federal officials that a new e-mail scam is circulating, falsely informing the recipient “that someone illegally is using your Social Security number and assuming your identity.” The e-mail, addressed to “Social Security Number And Card owner”, directs the recipient to a phony Web site designed to look like the official Social Security Web site.

Once directed to the phony site, the e-mail recipient is asked to confirm his identity by providing personal and financial information, including his social security number and bank account numbers. Specific information about the individual’s credit card number, expiration date and PIN number also is requested.

“Unsolicited e-mails and copycat Web sites are common tools used by con artists to trick consumers into divulging their personal information,” Madigan said. “Internet users should be wary of online solicitations and should never divulge personal information requested in an unsolicited e-mail.”

The Social Security Administration’s Office of Inspector General has confirmed that this e-mail was not sent by that Agency and said the Social Security Administration will never ask consumers to disclose their credit card information or PIN number via the Internet or over the phone.

Incidents regarding this e-mail should be reported to the Social Security Administration’s Office of Inspector General by calling 1-800-269-0271 or 1-866-501-2101 (TTY). Consumers also may call Madigan’s new Identity Theft Hotline at 1-866-999-5630. The TTY number is 1-877-844-5491. Madigan’s hotline, activated earlier this month, is the first of its kind in the nation, offering a dedicated toll-free number staffed by advocates specially trained to help victims repair their credit, dispute fraudulent debts and prevent future victimization.

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