NEVER TRUST CALLER ID

In the latest incident, the U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA) says crooks are spoofing its main customer service line -- 800-772-1213. In this case, the scammers are after personal information including your Social Security number (SSN), which they can use for identity theft. They may even try threatening to cut off your benefits if you don’t give them the info. But, when you think of it, how could someone cut off your benefits when they supposedly don’t know your SSN? It’s a dead giveaway for a scam! In other cases, they may claim to be offering an increase in benefits in return for your cooperation.

If you get one of these calls, the best solution is not to answer it at all. But if you do and the caller asks for your SSN, it’s definitely not the Social Security people -- so just hang up.

Another favorite call spoofing trick that scammers are increasingly using is to mimic local area phone code calls, which they know people are more likely to answer, especially if the number is similar to the victim’s own number. Once again, the best tactic is to ignore calls that come from numbers you don’t recognize. And if you do recognize it but it turns out to be a spoofed call, hang up.

A couple of things you shouldn’t do: Don’t get involved in a conversation if the caller is a real person. Just hang up. If it’s a recorded call (robocall) that invites you to key in a certain number to eliminate future calls, don’t do that either. The scammers just use that as an indicator that you’re really there on the end of the line and that, potentially, you’re gullible.

Ultimately, your best defense is, first, to be wary and skeptical whenever your phone starts ringing. Second, if you do pick up, refuse absolutely to give confidential information in response to any incoming call. After all, continued on next page
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there’s a near fifty percent chance it’s a Call Spoofing Scam. Remember, scammers are constantly trying to find ways around call-blocking technology.

Call Spoofing Scams are a good example of how crooks are always dreaming up new ways to get your hard earned money and your personal information. If you’re lucky, your phone service provider may offer some kind of call filtering service, but if you are screening your own calls, be on the alert.

If you need assistance with understanding any aspects of Call Spoofing Scams, contact your nearest Seniors Vs. Crime office in The Villages for advice or assistance. Seniors Vs. Crime can be reached at:

- The Fruitland Park Police Department Annex in the Moyer Recreation Center in The Villages – (352) 674-1882
- The Marion County Sheriff’s Office in The Villages – (352) 753-7775
- The Sumter County Sheriff’s Office in The Villages – (352) 689-4600, Extension 4606
- The Wildwood Police Department Annex at Brownwood in The Villages – (352) 750-1914 (temporarily located at the Moyer Recreation Center while the Wildwood Police Department wrestles with repairing fire damage at their main police station).

Volunteers at all four offices are ready, willing and able to assist you. To keep up with the latest scams, LIKE “Seniors vs. Crime Region 4” on Facebook. Hablamos Español. Por favor pregunte por Yolanda. Martes a Viernes: 10:00 A.M. a 2:00 P.M., (352) 689 4606.