



NEWS RELEASE

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Postal Inspectors List Top Five Scams Targeting Veterans and Tips for Combatting Them

WASHINGTON, DC – As we honor the men and women who have served this country in our armed forces on Veterans Day this Sunday, the [U.S. Postal Inspection Service](#) and its [Operation Protect Veterans](#) campaign want all veterans to be aware of these top five scams specifically targeting them:

- 1) **"Secret" Veteran Benefits Scam:** Veterans are told they qualify for "secret" government programs or benefits that offer thousands of dollars—but first, scammers attempt to collect personal information or a fee.
- 2) **Fake Charitable Giving Request:** Scammers are running bogus charities that claim to help fellow veterans.
- 3) **Benefits Buyout Offer:** Veterans in need are being taken advantage of by scammers who are offering a quick, upfront buyout—usually at a fraction of the value—of future disability or pension payments.
- 4) **VA Loan Scams:** Scammers are offering to refinance VA loans at very low rates.
- 5) **Bogus Employment Scam:** Scammers are posting fake job descriptions to collect personal information from a veteran's job application, or they are charging veterans an employment fee.

According to a recent AARP survey, **veterans are twice as likely to fall victim to scammers as the population at large.** That's why the U.S. Postal Inspection Service has teamed up with AARP to create Operation Protect Veterans, a national campaign designed to protect and educate our veterans.

What can veterans do to protect themselves? Operation Protect Veterans recommends the following:

- Consider blocking Social Security benefits from scammers looking for account details online. Go to www.socialsecurity.gov/blockaccess.
- Check out any offer or solicitation with a trusted family member, friend or your local veteran's affairs office before acting.
- Verify any charity asking for money before sending it. There are several online services veterans can use, such as [Charity Navigator](#), [CharityWatch](#) and [GuideStar](#).
- Don't give any personal information over the phone. This includes bank account numbers, credit card numbers and Social Security number.
- Never be pressured to act immediately. Just say "no," and hang up.
- Contact your telephone service provider, and ask them what kind of services they offer to help you block unwanted calls.
- Register your telephone number with the National Do Not Call registry at www.donotcall.gov, and get an answering machine and caller ID display. If you don't recognize the person leaving a message, don't pick up the phone!

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2-2-2 Postal Inspectors List Top five Scams, cont'd.

- Don't feel ashamed if you think you may have been victimized. Shame is a scammer's best friend. Report it by contacting your local police or AARP (protectveterans@aarp.org or 877-908-3360).

"Veterans share a special bond and trust, and scammers are using this to prey upon them," said U.S. Postal Inspection Service Chief Postal Inspector Guy Cottrell. "Additionally, because of the higher-than-average Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder rate among veterans, they are more susceptible to the emotional manipulation used by scammers. Some veterans have lost their homes, their life savings and worse as a result of scams. That's why our Operation Protect Veterans program is so vital, and why we are committed to helping educate and protect these men and women who have given so much to our country."

For more information on scams targeting veterans and how to defend against them, visit www.operationprotectveterans.com.

About the U.S. Postal Inspection Service: *The U.S. Postal Inspection Service is the nation's oldest federal law enforcement agency. It supports and protects the U.S. Postal Service and its employees, infrastructure and customers; it enforces the laws that defend the nation's mail system from illegal or dangerous use; and it ensures public trust in the mail. Over 2,400 postal inspectors, postal police, technical and administrative people are spread out over 17 divisions and the national headquarters in Washington. For more information, visit <https://postalinspectors.uspis.gov/>.*