

What You Should Know about Unemployment Scammers

Employment departments across the nation have seen unimaginable fraud during the COVID-19 pandemic. Both regular unemployment and Pandemic Unemployment Assistance have come under attack from domestic and foreign scammers.

California's Employment Development Department (EDD) has sharply reduced fraud with new security and identity verification measures, but scammers will continue to attempt attacks as new relief measures to address economic damage are rolled out.

Protect yourself

Scammers use your information to apply for unemployment in your name. By being watchful, you can help stop them.

The EDD or its contractors will never communicate with you via Telegram or WhatsApp.

Beware of:

- Romance scams. Includes fake dating profiles or people who immediately ask for money.
- Job opportunities. Legitimate employers are highly unlikely to hire via direct message.
- Cash giveaways, rewards, or prizes. If it sounds too good to be true, it is likely a scam.
- Offers of unclaimed vehicles or personal property.

Don't lose control of your personal information

Never share personal information if you are contacted via email, postal mail, or phone by someone you do not know and trust. Legitimate companies should not ask for personal information via messaging apps like WhatsApp, Telegram, or Facebook Messenger. If you receive any suspicious letters or phone calls, do not share any personal information. If you did not apply for unemployment benefits and receive a request to share your personal information via mail, do not respond.

Never provide unknown requestors or solicitors with:

- Name and date of birth
- Social Security number
- Photos of government documents
- Phone type
- Credit score
- Mobile carrier
- Bank account information
- Credit card number

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The EDD does not need access to your personal bank account. If someone calls or texts asking for your bank account information over the phone, do not share it.

ID.me is only responsible for the identity verification step of the process. ID.me does not handle payments or offer cash rewards. If you are asked to verify with ID.me in exchange for a cash prize or a job, do not verify and contact the EDD or ID.me immediately.

If you have children, always safeguard their personal information as well. Identity thieves often use children's Social Security numbers to create false identities.

Always double-check the phone number, messaging account, or email address to ensure the person you are talking to can be trusted. Scammers can impersonate a close friend or a legitimate business.

Be wary of criminals impersonating our services

ID.me has also found criminals impersonating its services online. ID.me only operates "id.me". Websites like "your-id-me.com" are not connected to ID.me.

Regarding phone calls, the EDD does call people, but the phone lines should show up under the caller ID as "St of CA EDD" or the number 1-800-300-5616. However, attackers have been known to spoof these numbers, so be sure to hang up if they ask for your mobile carrier or credit/debit card information over the phone.

If someone is asking you for too much personal information or you believe you have been the victim of a scam, report the incident to law enforcement immediately.