

DEFINE YOUR DECADE

2020 CENSUS

STAY SAFE WHILE YOU TAKE THE 2020 CENSUS

April 1, 2020 is Census Day, but census activity isn't limited to years ending in 0, and neither is census fraud. Census scammers may try to contact you by phone, mail, or home visit, or even direct you to phony websites.

Along with its once-a-decade population count, the actual U.S. Census Bureau conducts more than 130 surveys each year. The biggest, the American Community Survey (ACS), is sent yearly to more than 3.5 million homes. With detailed questions about things like income, assets, job status, household amenities, even your commute, the ACS does set off scam suspicions but it is legitimate, and relatively easy to verify (see tips on reverse).



No genuine census survey or agent can:

- Ask for your Social Security number, bank, credit card, or account numbers
- Ask when you leave for or return from work
- Ask for money or donations
- Ask for support for a political party
- Threaten jail time

Any of these is a sure sign that a supposed census taker is looking for ways to steal your identity, money or possessions.

Census fraud can hit at home or at work (the Census Bureau conducts business-related surveys, too). Be especially watchful for impostors in early and mid-spring of 2020, when the actual Census Bureau will be sending out reminders to fill out your form and following up in person at households that don't respond.

CENSUS SCAM WARNING SIGNS

- 1** You get an email claiming to be from the Census Bureau. For household surveys and the decennial census, the agency almost always makes contact by mail.
- 2** A supposed census agent asks you for money or financial data, such as your bank account number and balance. The Census Bureau will never ask for this information.
- 3** A supposed census taker threatens you with arrest. Taking part in the census is required by law, but you can't be imprisoned.

TIPS TO SPOT CENSUS SCAMS

- 1** Verify that a census taker is legitimate. All should have a Census Bureau photo ID badge (with a Department of Commerce watermark and an expiration date).
- 2** Contact the Bureau's National Processing Center or the regional office to verify the validity of an American Community Survey or other census communication.
- 3** Check that a census mailing has a return address of Jeffersonville, IN, the site of the National Processing Center. If it's from somewhere else, it's a scam.
- 4** Check the web address of any supposed census website. Make sure it has census.gov in the address and look for https:// or a lock symbol in the browser window.
- 5** Don't give your Social Security number, mother's maiden name, or bank or credit card numbers to someone claiming to be from the Census Bureau.
- 6** Don't reply, click links or open attachments in a suspicious census email.
- 7** Don't trust caller ID — scammers can use "spoofing" tools to make it appear they are calling from a real Census Bureau number. Call the National Processing Center at 800-523-3205, 800-642-0469 or 800-877-8339 (TDD/TTY) to verify that a phone survey is legitimate.

