

VA Update: Scams and Fraud

From: **Veterans Benefits Administration** | Veteransbenefits@messages.va.gov

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The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is committed to protecting you and your benefits from fraud and scams. We monitor the latest fraud and scam trends and share this critical information with you.



Overpayment Scam: Beware of anyone contacting you pretending to be VA

Have you received a call, text or letter from someone pretending to be with the Department of Veterans Affairs alleging you have a substantial VA debt due to overpayment? It can be a scam! The scammer uses high pressure tactics to insist the debt must be repaid

immediately via wire transfer, gift cards, cryptocurrency, or other non-traditional payment methods. VA will never demand Veterans repay their debts in full up front, as VA offers many [flexible payment plans](#) at no additional cost. Official VA Debt Management Center (DMC) communication will provide specific details about the debt, offer secure payment through www.pay.va.gov, and your appeal or waiver rights.

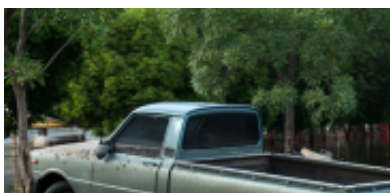
If you are suspicious of a communication alleging to be VA, you can verify authenticity with VA at 1-800-827-1000 or contact the DMC at 1-800-827-0648. Never share sensitive information, such as social security numbers, bank account details, or credit card information, when responding to unsolicited requests.



New Scams:

Bad actors continue to come up with new fraudulent schemes, from unpaid toll texts and fraudulent mailing messages to bereavement scams exploiting families after the loss of a loved one.

- **Bereavement scams**: Scammers exploit the vulnerability of grieving family members while contacting them to gather personal information or extort money with claims of fake debts owed by the deceased, inflated funeral expenses, processing fees, or unpaid insurance premiums.
- **Mail scams**: Involve text messages alleging to be from shipping companies or the United States Postal Service attempting to make a delivery, demanding delivery fee payment, or with a gift offer.
- **Unpaid Toll Texts**: Individuals receive a text notification indicating they have an excessive outstanding unpaid toll fee, and immediate payment is demanded to prevent driver privileges from being permanently revoked or arrest. The messages appear to be from companies such as EZPass, SunPass, PeachPass, and FastTrack, among others. The messages usually instruct the victim to click on a link to issue a payment for the outstanding fees.



Natural Disasters Fraud:

In the wake of natural disasters like tornadoes, flooding, earthquakes, fires, and hurricanes, it's



flooding, earthquakes, fires, and hurricanes, it's important for Veterans and their families to know VA is here to help. Scammers prey on vulnerability resulting from [natural disasters](#) and often exploit the chaos and desperation of homeowners in disaster-

stricken areas. To alleviate financial stress, which can heighten vulnerability, we recommend that Veterans enroll in [direct deposit](#) to receive their benefits. Likewise, scammers also seek to exploit generosity with [charity scams](#) to divert donations from genuine causes. [For resources to help manage fraud or to file a report](#), call 833-38V-SAFE.



Protect Your G.I. Bill Benefits From Scams

Unfortunately, some non-accredited educational institutions and programs employ [deceptive practices](#) and make embellished promises regarding the value and earning potential of their degrees. It is crucial for Veterans and their families to be well-informed when using their G.I. Bill benefits and to make wise financial decisions related to their education to avoid [student loan scams](#). Protect your benefits by only choosing [G.I. Bill approved schools](#). At VA, we are committed to empowering Veterans to make the best financial decisions related to their education. Therefore, VA encourages Veterans and their beneficiaries to familiarize themselves with education fraud warning signs.

Let's stand united as fraud fighters to safeguard the well-deserved benefits of our nation's heroes.

If you miss a VA benefits payment, identify a discrepancy in payments, or find suspicious activity with your direct deposit account, contact VA immediately at 1-800-827-1000. If you suspect you have experienced fraud, you can find resources to file a report to the appropriate agency by visiting [vsafe.gov](#) or by calling 1-833-38V-SAFE

[Learn More](#)

If you know a Veteran who is in crisis, call the [Veterans Crisis Line](#) by dialing 988 then press 1.

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