

Scammers Impersonating Law Enforcement Officers, FBI Warns From The Epoch Times 20 Sept 2026

The FBI warned Thursday that scammers were impersonating law enforcement officers and government officials to dupe people into giving up money and personal information.

Almost 61,000 complaints regarding such impersonation scams were reported to the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) between January 2025 and July 2026, the FBI said. The losses from these complaints totaled over \$1.6 billion, the FBI said in a Sept. 17 public service announcement.

The fraudsters use various pretenses to make initial contact with the target, including accusing them of wrongdoing and threatening negative consequences.

For instance, the scammer can accuse the target of being connected to a crime and threaten them with arrest and prosecution. The targets are asked to pay money to have the charges removed. According to the FBI, these types of scams make up the largest share of government impersonation complaints.

A second type of scam involves the fraudster accusing the target of failing to report for jury duty and threatening them with fines. The scammer can also allege that the target has missed a court date and asks them to make a payment, failing which an arrest warrant may be issued.

Between January 2025 and July 2026, IC3 received 6,833 complaints about jury duty scams, resulting in losses of nearly \$36 million.

In another scam, the fraudster claims that the target's driver's license, passport, or professional license is about to expire and demands payment to renew it. IC3 received 496 complaints of this type of scam from January 2025 to July 2026, resulting in losses of over \$348,000.

Scammers can also impersonate U.S.-based foreign diplomatic officials or foreign law enforcement agencies to defraud various ethnic communities, international students, and foreign nationals.

The fraudsters may threaten the target with cancellation of their home nation's passport or extradition. In some cases, the scammers may wear bogus

police uniforms and use fake sets of government facilities. IC3 received 1,809 such complaints, totaling more than \$140 million in losses, between January 2025 and July 2026.

In one case of impersonation crime, the Department of Justice (DOJ) announced in a Feb. 20 statement that five people were charged with impersonating immigration judges, lawyers, and law enforcement officers.

The defendants allegedly carried out sham immigration proceedings, including court appearances and interviews for asylum, which the victims attended through videoconferencing. The scammers wore law enforcement uniforms and judicial robes and appeared in front of backgrounds resembling government offices and courtrooms.

In another case, 19 individuals were arrested across the United States, Ecuador, Colombia, and El Salvador in a visa-fraud scheme, the DOJ said in a Dec. 3 statement.

The defendants and co-conspirators allegedly impersonated U.S. government officials through video calls and convinced victims to make wire transfers.

In its recent statement, the FBI said scammers can demand various forms of payment, such as through cryptocurrency, bank wires, couriers, and prepaid cards. The agency said government or law enforcement officials will never request payments through courier, cryptocurrency, or prepaid cards.

“Scammers will use a variety of approaches while impersonating these officials, such as using urgent and aggressive tones, refusing to speak to or leave messages with anyone other than the targeted victim, keeping victims on the phone for the duration of the scam, or urging victims not to tell family, friends, financial institutions, or law enforcement about the call,” the FBI said.

Moreover, artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly being used to commit scams.

To tackle impersonation fraud harming Americans, a group of lawmakers introduced the AI Fraud Accountability Act in March, according to a March 4 statement from the office of Rep. Vern Buchanan (R-Fla.).

AI tools have now made it easier to create realistic audio-visual

impersonations of individuals, opening up new ways for fraudsters to carry out scams, the statement said.

The measure seeks to create a new offense under the Communications Act that would prohibit individuals from falsely presenting themselves as a real or imaginary person through digital impersonation with the intent to defraud people.

“As artificial intelligence becomes more advanced, criminals are exploiting it to scam hardworking Americans,” Buchanan said.

“We are seeing a disturbing rise in AI-generated voice clones and deepfake videos that convincingly impersonate loved ones, business executives, government officials and trusted institutions to steal money.”