
Fraud Alert!

Financial Fraud Update Covid-19 Payment Scams

- Payment facts
- Impostor scams
- Scam prevention

Covid-19 relief payments

The U.S. Congress enacted a massive relief package to lessen the impact of the Covid-19 disease health measures and restrictions. Some of the relief payments to individuals have already been completed and were made to you by a U.S. Treasury check or Direct Deposit into your account. A third payment method has just started utilizing a VISA Debit Card sent to individuals from MetaBank.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) have raised concerns about *scammers and fraudsters that impersonate federal employees* and ask you to verify personal account information in order to receive a payment. Take a few minutes and carefully read all the provisions and guidelines:

■ [Here are the payment facts](#)

The relief package passed by the U.S. Congress mandates the following.

- Direct cash payments of up to \$1,200 for individuals and \$2,400 for couples.
- There is an additional benefit of \$500 for each child in the household.
- There are payment rules and restrictions that determine eligibility and are applied to payment amounts based on these income limits.
- The payments were calculated using an individual's information provided on their 2019 U.S. Tax Returns for those who filed them or 2018 U.S. Tax Returns if they had not filed for 2019 yet.

NOTE: All the payment rules, restrictions and limitations are available at the U.S. Treasury website www.treasury.gov.

■ Here are the security facts

- The U.S. Government will not contact you about these payments.
- The U.S. Government will not ask you to verify payment information of any kind.
- The U.S. Government will not ask you to pay any sort of fee or charge to receive payment.
- The U.S. Government will not offer to expedite your payment for a fee.
- The U.S. Government will never call, text or email you and require you to click on a link to activate the debit card (see Economic Impact Payments by Debit Card).

ECONOMIC IMPACT PAYMENTS BY DEBIT CARD

Some people have already received the Economic Impact Payment by U.S. Government Check mailed to your address or by Direct Deposit into your financial account. If you are still waiting for a payment, then you might receive it via a debit card instead of a check in the mail. Keep an eye on your mailbox for either payment method.

The facts about debit card payments

- **Check your mail carefully.** The envelope will be from “Money Network Cardholder Service.” Inside will be a VISA-branded prepaid debit card issued by MetaBank. This VISA debit card will give you access to your Economic Impact Payment from the U.S. Government.
- **Activate the card immediately.** The instructions on how to activate the card are straight-forward. You can activate your card by calling 1-800-240-8100 or visiting USdebitcard.gov and clicking on the EIP card link.
- **Caution -** To activate the debit card, you must reveal your Social Security number. *Just remember that you have initiated the action.*
- Once the card is activated, you can get cash or use it anywhere that accepts VISA debit cards.
- There are no fees associated with transferring money from the card to your financial account.
- **Questions about the card?** Money Network has a 24-hour call center: 1-800-240-8100. You can call to check your card balance or just ask questions.

Unless you ask for assistance, no one from the U.S. Government will ever call to ask you about the Economic Impact Payment debit card, U.S. Treasury check or Direct Deposit.

■ What should I do to protect my personal information

Your personal information is secure with your financial institution unless you take an action to allow someone to access the accounts.

The scammers are very convincing con artists and good at what they do. They will use telephone calls, text messages, pop-up messages or emails that all convey a sense of urgency to push you to reveal your personal account information and passwords. They might use a combination of their methods of fraud. They are criminals trying to steal your payment.

Fraud protection tips

- Hang up if you receive a telephone call from someone who claims to be from a government agency asking for verification of personal information.
- Ignore or delete it if you get a pop-up message, email or text that directs you to call a certain number or visit a website to verify personal information.
- Never reply to a phone number or use a website that is part of a suspicious call, pop-up or text message to verify personal information.
- Emails are sent to your inbox and direct you to replica websites of a trusted or well-known institution such as your financial institution or a government agency. When in doubt, *you should initiate contact* through a known telephone number or website.

In our busy world, it is easy to be scammed, especially when a sense of urgency is conveyed by the scammer. Just ask yourself the question: Why would your financial institution or the government need to contact you for personal information to make or receive a payment—they already have it!

■ Report any attempted theft

- Federal Trade Commission
www.ftc.gov
- Federal Bureau of Investigation
www.fbi.gov
- Internet Crime Complaint Center
www.ic3.gov
- Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
www.fdic.gov
- National Credit Union Association
www.ncua.gov