

POTENTIAL FRAUD ALERT

GIFT CARD/PII ISSUE

ISSUED DATE: NOVEMBER 21, 2013

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A marketing company has acquired and is using two toll free numbers which are VERY SIMILAR to VBA toll free numbers. The marketer is trying to get callers to sign up to receive a Wal-Mart gift card, and is asking for PII, to include credit card information. When asked if they are the VA, they reply vaguely, and explain that the VA is very busy and the call was directed to them. They don't say they are the VA, but if asked if they can help with VA benefits, they say yes. In addition, they even offer to transfer the call to the VA, after the caller provides the credit card information to get the free Wal-Mart gift card.

This issue has been reported to the Office of the Inspector General and the Federal Trade Commission for review.

The two numbers identified in this alert are:

- 1-800-872-1000 which is very close to our main number of 1-800-827-1000
- 1-888-442-4511 which is very close to our GI-Bill number of 1-888-442-4551

FAQS AND SUGGESTED SCRIPTS

Q1. WHAT SHOULD WE TELL A VETERAN IF HE/SHE ASKS IF THIS IS A LEGITIMATE OFFER?

A: "The VA is not participating in any gift card promotions. We have been advised of this situation and have referred the issue to our Office of the Inspector General and have filed a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission. Please use caution when disclosing personal information as it could be a fraudulent situation."

Disabilities determined by VA to be related to your military service can lead to monthly non-taxable compensation, enrollment in the VA health care system, a 10-point hiring preference for federal employment and other important benefits. Ask your VA representative or Veterans Service Organization representative about Disability Compensation, Pension, Health Care, Caregiver Program, Career Services, Educational Assistance, Home Loan Guaranty, Insurance and/or Dependents and Survivors' Benefits.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



Q2. IS THE VA RESEARCHING THIS ISSUE OR ATTEMPTING TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST THE COMPANY?

A: “The VA has reported this issue to the Office of the Inspector General and filed a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission. They will be reviewing the situation to determine the appropriate course of action.”

Q3. WHAT SHOULD WE TELL SOMEONE IF THEY HAVE MISTAKENLY RELEASED THEIR PII IN THIS SITUATION?

A: “The VA has reported this issue to the Office of the Inspector General and filed a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission. They will be reviewing the situation to determine the appropriate course of action. If you feel you have disclosed your personal information to an unauthorized individual, please contact your credit card company and advise them of the situation, review transactions, and request that a new card number be issued. You may request a free credit report from credit reporting agencies. In addition, you should also contact the FTC at 1-877-382-4357 and file a complaint.”

Q4. I CALLED THIS COMPANY. HOW CAN I FILE A COMPLAINT?

A: “Thank you for reporting this information to VA, you can contact the FTC at 1-877-382-4357 and file a complaint.”