

# NEWS RELEASE



**GARDEN CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
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## **Identity Theft: Unemployment Benefits**

The Garden City Police Department reports a dozen fraud cases emerging in the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic. Imposters are filing claims for unemployment benefits, using the names and personal information of people who have not filed claims. It has been determined that some scammers are using information from old data breaches of private or government agencies. As of June 30<sup>th</sup>, the Department has investigated 12 cases of this fraudulent activity.

Commissioner Jackson states claimants should never:

- Post screenshots of their claim or their claim status on social media;
- Provide their Social Security number or unemployment benefit claim number to people on social media who offer to help resolve their issues;
- Agree to pay a private firm or individual to file for unemployment insurance benefits on their behalf (the social security department does not charge a fee for filing a claim); or
- File a claim in a crowded setting where someone may “shoulder surf” and steal your data by looking over your shoulder.

According to Commissioner Jackson the indications that someone has used your information to claim benefits include: receiving information in the mail from the Department of Labor about a claim you did not file, or your employer receiving notice of an unemployment claim filed in your name. All unemployment fraud should be reported since unemployment benefits are taxable income.

If this happens to you, it means someone is misusing your personal information, including your Social Security number and date of birth. All victims should act promptly by following these steps that can help you protect your finances and your credit:

- Contact your employer's HR Department;
  - Contact the NYS Department of Labor by calling (888) 209-8124 or emailing <https://www.labor.ny.gov/agencyinfo/report-fraud.shtm>;
  - File a police report with the Police department;
  - File an identity theft complaint with the Federal Trade Commission at [www.FTC.gov](http://www.FTC.gov);
  - Report the activity to the credit bureaus (Experian, Equifax, Transunion), and place a fraud alert or credit freeze;
  - Keep notes for future reference.
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- If you get benefits you never applied for, report it to your state unemployment agency and ask for instructions. Do not respond to any calls, emails, or text messages telling you

to wire money, send cash, or put money on gift cards. Government agencies will never tell you to repay money that way. Anyone who tells you to do those things is a scammer.

Commissioner Jackson states the Garden City Police Department's Detective Division is working with the United States Secret Service in the investigation of fraudulent unemployment applications.