

Town of Duxbury, Massachusetts

OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES



TO: All Employees
FROM: Jeannie Horne, Human Resources Director
DATE: January 7, 2021
RE: Beware of Fraudulent Unemployment Claims

On May 27, 2020, the MA Department of Unemployment Assistance issued a [press release](#) regarding a spike in fraudulent unemployment claims being filed using stolen personally identifiable information (PII). On July 6, 2020, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) issued a similar [press release](#) to protect employees from unemployment benefits scams.

In light of the above, and because the Town of Duxbury has learned fraudulent claims have been filed on behalf of several employees, we are sending this notice to provide information and relevant guidance issued by the MA Department of Unemployment Assistance, MA Attorney General, and the FBI so that you can take steps to protect yourself.

The FBI notes that many victims of identity theft related to unemployment insurance claims do not know they have been targeted until they try to file a claim for unemployment insurance benefits, receive a notification from the state unemployment insurance agency, receive an IRS Form 1099-G showing the benefits collected from unemployment insurance, or receive notice from their employer that a claim has been filed while the victim is still employed.

The FBI advises to be on the lookout for the following suspicious activities:

- Receiving communications regarding unemployment insurance forms when you have not applied for unemployment benefits
- Unauthorized transactions on your bank or credit card statements related to unemployment benefits
- Fees involved in filing or qualifying for unemployment insurance
- Unsolicited inquires related to unemployment benefits
- Fictitious websites and social media pages mimicking those of government agencies

The FBI provides the following tips to protect yourself from these scams:

- Be wary of telephone calls and text messages, letters, websites, or emails that require you to provide your personal information or other sensitive information, especially birth dates and Social Security numbers. Be cautious with attachments and embedded links within email, especially from an unknown email sender.
- Make yourself familiar with the methods fraudsters use to obtain PII and how to combat these methods by following security tips issued by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, including:
 - [Avoiding Social Engineering and Phishing Attacks](#)
 - [Protecting Against Malicious Code](#)
 - [Preventing and Responding to Identity Theft](#)
- Monitor your bank accounts on a regular basis and [request your credit report](#) at least once a year to look for any fraudulent activity. If you believe you are a victim, review your credit report more frequently.
- Immediately report unauthorized transactions to your financial institution or credit card provider.
- If you suspect you are a victim, immediately contact the three major credit bureaus to place a fraud alert on your credit records. Additionally, notify the Internal Revenue Service by filing an Identity Theft Affidavit (IRS Form 14039) through [irs.gov](#) or [identitytheft.gov](#).

If you have been contacted by the MA Department of Unemployment Assistance about unemployment benefits that you did not apply for, the FBI advises that you should be aware of the possibility of identity theft. For more specific information about how to protect your identity or report identity theft, visit the [MA Attorney General's website](#).

If you believe a false unemployment claim has been filed using your identity, you can find more information [on the Mass.gov website](#). You can also contact the MA Department of Unemployment Assistance at [mass.gov/unemployment-fraud](#) or call the DUA customer service department at [877-626-6800](#).

Additionally, if you believe you have been a victim of identity theft related to fraudulent unemployment insurance claims, report the fraud to law enforcement, state unemployment insurance agencies, the IRS, major credit bureaus, and the Town's HR department. The FBI encourages victims to report fraudulent or any suspicious activities to the Internet Crime Complaint Center at [ic3.gov](#). You can find help for reporting and recovering from identity theft at [identitytheft.gov](#).