



**To:** Interested parties  
**From:** DES Assistant Secretary Pryor Gibson  
**Date:** Dec. 10, 2021

## Re: Unemployment Benefits Imposter Fraud

The Division of Employment Security (DES) has detected a recent increase in suspected imposter fraud in the unemployment benefits system. Fraud safeguards put in place by DES flagged suspicious claims to prevent payments from being released.

Imposter fraud occurs when a person's stolen identifying information is used to file a fraudulent unemployment claim. The stolen personal information is often obtained through outside data breaches, phishing scams and schemes that were part of larger criminal efforts unrelated to unemployment. DES has not experienced a data breach.

### For Victims of Unemployment Imposter Fraud

- If you receive communications relating to an unemployment claim and you did not apply for benefits, you or your employer should report the suspected fraud to DES.
- If you receive a notice from DES to complete ID.me identity verification and did not file a claim for unemployment benefits, **do not** complete the ID.me process. Only legitimate claimants should complete the identity verification process for unemployment benefits.
- If you receive an overpayment notice related to a fraudulent claim, you are not liable for the overpayment.
- Employers should review all notices they receive from DES relating to unemployment benefit charges and employee separations and report any fraudulent claims.

**Report suspected unemployment fraud to DES using the online [Fraud Report Form at des.nc.gov/fraud](https://des.nc.gov/fraud) or by calling the Fraud Hotline at 984-465-9224.**

DES knows it can be distressing to learn that your personal information has been compromised. It is highly recommended that victims take the following steps to prevent further misuse of their personal information:

- File a police report. While DES does not have the ability to investigate how your information was obtained, we cooperate with law enforcement in the investigation of identity theft.
- File a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission at [www.identitytheft.gov](https://www.identitytheft.gov) or call the FTC hotline at 877-438-4338. [IdentityTheft.gov](https://www.IdentityTheft.gov) is the federal government's one-stop resource to help you report and recover from identity theft.
- Contact one of the three major credit bureaus to place a fraud alert on your account.
  - Equifax: [www.equifax.com](https://www.equifax.com) or 800-685-1111
  - Experian: [www.experian.com](https://www.experian.com) or 888-397-3742
  - TransUnion: [www.transunion.com](https://www.transunion.com) or 800-680-7289