

POTENTIAL CRIMINAL ACTIVITY ASSOCIATED TO THE 2010 UTAH CENSUS

The 2010 U.S. Census is underway and Census workers will begin mailing out Census questionnaires on March 15, 2010. Utah residents will have approximately one month to return the Census questionnaires.

Beginning May 1, 2010, Census workers will begin going door-to-door to hand out Census questionnaires to those who did not respond.

The FBI assesses that any violence or fraud related to the 2010 U.S. Census will likely be the result of isolated, individual incidents rather than widespread organized efforts by persons or groups opposed to the collection of Census data or undermining the integrity of the Census. Open source reporting indicates that incidents of individuals fraudulently posing as Census workers have already begun in Colorado.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, residents will receive an introductory letter before they are contacted in person, via telephone or are mailed a Census questionnaire. Census workers are also required to display their Census Bureau badge, provide the name of the survey the resident is being asked to participate in and provide a copy of the letter that should have been received prior to their visit. Regardless of whether someone is a legitimate Census employee or not, the Census Bureau advises consumers to not allow workers inside their homes.

Criminals may attempt to gain access to sensitive information such as Social Security, bank account or credit card numbers by distributing fraudulent mailings, e-mails, or impersonating Census employees. Actual Census employees will never ask for information relating to an individual's identity or finances. Additionally, the Census Bureau will not contact citizens by e-mail.

The big question is, how do you tell the difference between a U.S. Census worker and a con artist? The Better Business Bureau offers the following advice:

- If a U.S. Census worker knocks on your door, they will have a badge, a handheld device, a Census Bureau canvas bag and a confidentiality notice. Ask to see their identification and their badge before answering their questions. However, you should never invite anyone you don't know into your home.
- Census workers are currently only knocking on doors to verify address information. Do not give your Social Security number, credit card or banking information to anyone, even if they claim they need it for the U.S. Census. While the Census Bureau might ask for basic financial information, such as a salary range, it will not ask for Social Security, bank account or credit card number or will employees solicit donations.
- Eventually, Census workers may contact you by telephone, mail or in person at home. However, they will not contact you by e-mail, so be on the lookout for e-mail scams impersonating the Census. Never click on a link or open any attachments in an e-mail that are supposedly from the U.S. Census Bureau.

For more advice on avoiding identity theft and fraud, visit www.bbb.org. For further information, please call the Brigham City Police Department at (435) 734-6650 or visit our website www.brighamcity.utah.gov.

