

Summary: Unknown Individual Misdirected Interior Official's Pay

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The OIG investigated allegations that, in May 2020, an unknown individual contacted human resources (HR) personnel at a Department of the Interior (DOI) bureau, impersonated a DOI official, and requested a change in the routing of the official's pay.

We substantiated that an unknown person or persons fraudulently represented themselves as the official in an email to an HR specialist and requested a change in payroll direct deposit routing. The HR specialist worked with another HR specialist to redirect the official's pay to the account that the unknown person or persons provided. The action misdirected \$64,097 of the official's salary, which the official discovered some time later.

We did not identify who requested the misdirection of these funds. After we notified the banks involved in the matter and supplied them with the account information, \$43,350 of the \$64,097, all of which constituted stolen U.S. Government funds, was frozen and later returned to the DOI. We confirmed that the DOI returned to the official the total amount of misdirected funds, which resulted in a loss to the Government of \$20,747. The bureau told us that it has since implemented internal standard operating procedures to prevent a reoccurrence of this situation.

This is a summary of an investigative report we issued to the DOI.

