



2010 Census Cautions

With the U.S. Census process beginning, Susan Johnson of the Better Business Bureau (BBB) advises people to be cooperative, but cautious, so as not to become a victim of fraud or identity theft. The first phase of the 2010 U.S. Census is under way as workers have begun verifying the addresses of households across the country.

The big question is - how do you tell the difference between a U.S. Census worker and a con artist? BBB 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. Don't 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 numbers nor 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 Email, so be on the lookout for Email scams impersonating the Census. Never click on a link or open any attachments in an Email that are supposedly from the U.S. Census Bureau.

The Better Business Bureau (BBB) wants you to be cautious about giving information to Census Takers that come to your door and to completely ignore any e-Mail that appears to be from a 2010 Census Taker or from the BBB. Here are the facts the BBB wants you to know -

In March of 2010, census forms will be delivered to every residence in the United States and Puerto Rico. When you receive yours, answer the 10 short questions and then mail the form back in the postage-paid envelope provided. If you don't mail the form back, you can expect a visit from a Census Taker, who will ask you the questions from the form. A Census Taker must follow-up in person with every address that doesn't mail back the form in order to obtain the responses.

The Census is Safe -

* The 2010 Census will ask for name, gender, age, race, ethnicity, relationship, and whether you own or rent your home - just 10 simple questions that will take about 10 minutes to answer. Each question helps to determine how more than \$400 billion will be allocated to communities across the country.

* The Census Bureau safeguards all census responses to the highest security standards available.

* Your answers are protected by law and are not shared with anyone. The Census Taker who collects your information is sworn for life to protect your data under Federal Law Title 13. Those who violate the oath face criminal penalties. Under federal law, the penalty for unlawful disclosure is a fine of up to \$250,000 or imprisonment for up to 5 years, or both.

When Will Census Takers be Going Door-to-Door?

* From April to July 2010, the Census Bureau will knock on the door of every household that does not mail back a completed 2010 Census form.

* It's critical that you take just 10 minutes to fill out and mail back your form rather than wait for a Census Worker to show up on your doorstep. About \$85 million in taxpayer dollars are saved for every one percent

increase in mail response.

- * The Census Bureau must get a census form to - and a completed form back from - every residence in the United States. That's more than 130 million addresses. This is why the census is the largest domestic mobilization our nation undertakes.

How to Identify a Census Taker. If a U.S. Census Bureau employee knocks on your door, here are some recognition tips to assure the validity of the employee:

- * The Census Taker must present an ID badge that contains a Department of Commerce watermark and expiration date. The Census Taker may also be carrying a bag with a Census Bureau logo.
- * The Census Taker will provide you with supervisor contact information and/or the Local Census Office phone number for verification, if asked.
- * The Census Taker will ONLY ask you the 10 questions that appear on the census form.

What the 2010 Census DOES NOT Ask.

- * 2010 Census Takers will not ask you for your social security number, bank account number, or credit card number.
- * 2010 Census Takers never solicits for donations and will never contact you by e-mail.
- * 2010 Census Takers will not ask you additional questions that did not appear on the original census form. If they do, do not respond to the questions).

If you want more information about the upcoming 2010 Census, visit <http://www.2010census.gov>.