



FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

Consumer Information

consumer.ftc.gov

The top frauds of 2019

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by Monica Vaca

Associate Director, Division of Consumer Response and Operations

Each year, the FTC takes a hard look at the number of reports people make to our Consumer Sentinel Network. In fact, during 2019, we got more than 3.2 million [reports to the FTC \(https://www.ftc.gov/complaint\)](https://www.ftc.gov/complaint), from you. We've read what you've said, and crunched the numbers. Here's what you told us in 2019.

- **Imposter scams (<http://www.ftc.gov/imposters>) was the number one fraud reported to Sentinel in 2019.** People reported losing more than \$667 million to imposters, who often pretended to be calling from the government or a well-known business, a romantic interest, or a family member with an emergency. When people lost money, they most frequently reported paying scammers with a [gift card \(http://www.ftc.gov/giftcards\)](http://www.ftc.gov/giftcards).
- **Social Security imposters were the top government imposter scam reported.** There were 166,190 reports about the [Social Security scam \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yPY-HFXZS24&feature=youtu.be\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yPY-HFXZS24&feature=youtu.be), and the median individual loss was \$1,500.
- **Phone calls were the number one way people reported being contacted by scammers.** While most people said they hung up on those calls, those who lost money reported a median loss of \$1,000 in 2019.

You might wonder what, besides these numbers, comes out of reporting scams and other consumer issues to the FTC. Well, because of your reports, the FTC and its law enforcement partners are able to investigate the people and companies that trick people into paying money. Your reports help build and bring those cases, which also helps us enforce laws that stop scams and other dishonest business practices that take people's money.

In fact, during 2019, FTC law enforcement actions led to more than \$232 million in refunds to people who lost money. More than 1.9 million people cashed checks mailed by the FTC. And, in the last four years, people have cashed more than one billion dollars in FTC refund checks. That's real money back into people's pockets.

So if you've spotted a scam, keep telling us about it at [ftc.gov/complaint \(http://www.ftc.gov/complaint\)](http://www.ftc.gov/complaint). If you need more information about these top frauds, visit [ftc.gov/imposters \(http://www.ftc.gov/imposters\)](http://www.ftc.gov/imposters), and [ftc.gov/giftcards \(http://www.ftc.gov/giftcards\)](http://www.ftc.gov/giftcards).

Curious about exploring Consumer Sentinel data, or just want to see what's happening in your state? Check out this new video to learn how.



(<https://youtu.be/F2wQGBjKiaM>).

Blog Topics: [Money & Credit \(https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/money-%26-credit\)](https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/money-%26-credit), [Privacy, Identity & Online Security \(https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/privacy%2C-identity-%26-online-security\)](https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/privacy%2C-identity-%26-online-security).