

Don't Fall for New Tax Scam Tricks by IRS Posers

Though the tax season is over, tax scammers work year-round. The IRS advises you to stay alert to protect yourself against new ways criminals pose as the IRS to trick you out of your money or personal information. These scams first tried to sting older Americans, newly arrived immigrants and those who speak English as a second language. The crooks have expanded their net, and now try to swindle virtually anyone. Here are several tips from the IRS to help you avoid being a victim of these scams:

- **Scams use scare tactics.** These aggressive and sophisticated scams try to scare people into making a false tax payment that ends up with the criminal. Many phone scams use threats to try to intimidate you so you will pay them your money. They often threaten arrest or deportation, or that they will revoke your license if you don't pay. They may also leave "urgent" callback request, sometimes thorough "robo-calls," via phone or email. The emails will often contain a fake IRS document with a phone number or an email address for you to reply.
- **Scams use caller ID spoofing.** Scammers often alter caller ID to make it look like the IRS or another agency is calling. The callers use IRS titles and fake badge numbers to appear legit. They may use online resources to get your name, address, and other details about your life to make the call sound official.
- **Scams use phishing email and regular mail.** Scammers copy official IRS letterhead to use in email or regular mail they send to victims. In another new variation, schemers provide an actual IRS address where they tell the victim to mail a receipt for the payment they make. All in an attempt to make the scheme look official.
- **Scams cost victims over \$20 million.** The Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration, or TIGTA, has received reports of about 600,000 contacts since October 2013. TIGTA is also aware of nearly 4,000 victims who have collectively reported over \$20 million in financial losses as a result of tax scams.

The real IRS **will not**:

- Call you to demand immediate payment. The IRS will not call you if you owe taxes without first sending you a bill in the mail.
- Demand that you pay taxes and not allow you to question or appeal the amount that you owe.
- Require that you pay your taxes a certain way. For instance, require that you pay with a prepaid debit card.
- Ask for credit or debit card numbers over the phone.
- Threaten to bring police or other agencies to arrest you for not paying.

If you don't owe taxes or have no reason to think that you do:

- Do not provide any information to the caller. Hang up immediately.
- Contact the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration. Use TIGTA's IRS Impersonation Scam Reporting web page to report the incident.
- You should also report it to the Federal Trade Commission. Use the FTC Complaint Assistant on FTC.gov. Please add "IRS Telephone Scam" in the notes.
- Contact our office at 636-394-5524 and ask to speak with Anna or John for assistance.

If you know you owe, or think you may owe taxes:

- Call the IRS at 800-829-1040. IRS workers can help you if you do owe taxes.
- Contact our office at 636-394-5524 and ask to speak with Anna or John for assistance.

Stay alert to scams that use the IRS as a lure. For more information give us a call at 636-394-5524.