



IR-2016-62: IRS Warns of Continued Scams, Varied Tactics as the Tax Deadline Nears

Internal Revenue Service (IRS) sent this bulletin at 04/13/2016 12:20 PM EDT



IRS Newswire

April 13, 2016

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IRS Warns of Continued Scams, Varied Tactics as the Tax Deadline Nears

WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service today issued a warning that scammers may try using the April 18 tax deadline to prey on hard-working taxpayers by impersonating the IRS and others with fake phone calls and emails. Even after the tax deadline passes, taxpayers should know the telltale signs of a scam and tips to protect themselves from a variety of phone scams and phishing emails.

"We've seen continuing activity in these scams throughout the filing season," said IRS Commissioner John Koskinen. "As the tax deadline nears, these criminals may try and trick honest taxpayers over the phone or via email, and people should remain vigilant. After the tax deadline, watch out for these scammers promising a refund or threatening you with an unexpected tax bill."

These scam artists frequently masquerade as being from the IRS, a tax company and sometimes even a state revenue department. By email, they try enticing people to click on links on official-looking messages containing questions related to their tax refund. Report these emails to phishing@irs.gov. By phone, many scammers use threats to intimidate and bully people into paying a tax

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bill. They may even threaten to arrest, deport or revoke the driver's license of their victim if they don't get the money.

Variations of these scams can be seen nationwide, and it's more important than ever to be cautious with providing personal or financial information. As part of the effort to protect taxpayers, the IRS has teamed up with state revenue departments and the tax industry to make sure taxpayers understand the dangers to their personal and financial data as part of the "[Taxes. Security. Together.](#)" campaign. Some examples of the varied tactics seen this year are:

- Soliciting W-2 information from payroll and human resources professionals--[IR-2016-34](#)
- "Verifying" tax return information over the phone--[IR-2016-40](#)
- Pretending to be from the tax preparation industry--[IR-2016-28](#)

There are some important reminders for taxpayers nationwide about these schemes:

Watch Out for Threatening Phone Calls

Beware of scammers making unsolicited calls claiming to be IRS officials. They demand that the victim pay a bogus tax bill. They con the victim into sending cash, usually through a prepaid debit card or wire transfer. They may also leave "urgent" callback requests through phone "robo-calls," or via a [phishing email](#).

Scammers often alter caller ID numbers to make it look like the IRS or another agency is calling. The callers use IRS titles and fake badge numbers to appear legitimate. They may use the victim's name, address and other personal information to make the call sound official.

The IRS Will Never:

- Call to demand immediate payment over the phone, nor will the agency call about taxes owed without first having mailed you a bill.
- Threaten to immediately bring in local police or other law-enforcement groups to have you arrested for not paying.
- Demand that you pay taxes without giving you the opportunity to question or appeal the amount they say you owe.
- Require you to use a specific payment method for your taxes, such as a prepaid debit card.

- Ask for credit or debit card numbers over the phone.

If you get a phone call from someone claiming to be from the IRS and asking for money and you don't owe taxes, here's what you should do:

- Do not give out any information. Hang up immediately.
- Contact TIGTA to report the call. Use their "[IRS Impersonation Scam Reporting](#)" web page or call 800-366-4484.
- Report it to the Federal Trade Commission. Use the "[FTC Complaint Assistant](#)" on FTC.gov. Please add "IRS Telephone Scam" in the notes.
- If you think you might owe taxes, call the IRS directly at 1-800-829-1040.

Avoid e-mail phishing attempts

There has been a surge in e-mail scams this year that appear to be from a tax agency or a tax software company.

Never reply to emails, texts or pop-up messages asking for your personal, tax or financial information. One common trick by criminals is to impersonate a business such as your financial institution, tax software provider or the IRS, asking you to update your account and providing a link. For small business, these schemes may try impersonating a company leader and request payroll and human resource information for employees in your company. Never click on links even if they seem to be from organizations you trust. Go directly to the organization's website.

And if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. If you see an email that says 'You won a free cruise' or 'The IRS has a refund waiting for you,' odds are high that it is a phishing attempt looking to get your personal information.

If you get a 'phishing' email, remember this important advice:

- Don't reply to the message.
- Don't give out your personal or financial information.
- Forward the email to phishing@irs.gov. Then delete it.
- Don't open any attachments or click on any links. They may have malicious code that will infect your

computer.

More information on how to [report phishing or phone scams](#) is available on IRS.gov.

Additional IRS Resources:

- www.irs.gov/identitytheft
- [Fact Sheet 2016-1](#), IRS, States and Tax Industry Combat Identity Theft and Refund Fraud on Many Fronts
- [Fact Sheet 2016-2](#), IRS, States and Tax Industry Urge Taxpayers to Join the Effort to Combat Identity Theft
- [Fact Sheet 2016-3](#), IRS Identity Theft Victim Assistance: How It Works
- [Fact Sheet 2016-4](#), How New Identity Security Changes May Affect Taxpayers for 2016

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