



Beware of IRS Phone Scam

The Internal Revenue Service reminds taxpayers to be careful with continuing aggressive phone scams as criminals pose as IRS agents in hopes of stealing money.

During filing season, the IRS generally sees a surge in scam phone calls threatening such things as arrest, deportation and license revocation if the victim doesn't pay a bogus tax bill. In a new twist being seen in recent weeks, identity thieves file fraudulent tax returns with refunds going into the real taxpayer's bank account – followed by a phone call trying to con the taxpayer to send the money to the scammer.

How Do the Scams Work?

Con artists make unsolicited calls claiming to be IRS officials. They demand that the victim pay a bogus tax bill. They convince the victim to send cash, usually through a wire transfer or a prepaid debit card or gift card. They may also leave "urgent" callback requests through phone "robo-calls," or send a phishing email.

Many phone scams use threats to intimidate and bully a victim into paying. They may even threaten to arrest, deport or revoke the driver's license of their victim if they don't get the money.

Scammers often alter caller ID numbers to make it look like the IRS or another agency is calling. The callers use IRS employee 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.

Here are some things the scammers often do, but the IRS will not do. Taxpayers should remember that any one of these is a tell-tale sign of a scam.

The IRS Will Never:

Call to demand immediate payment using a specific payment method such as a prepaid debit card, gift card or wire transfer. Generally, the IRS will first mail a bill to any taxpayer who owes taxes.

- Threaten to immediately bring in local police or other law-enforcement groups to have the taxpayer arrested for not paying.
- Demand that taxes be paid without giving taxpayers the opportunity to question or appeal the amount owed.
- Ask for credit or debit card numbers over the phone.
- Call you about an unexpected refund.

Citizens who receive scam calls:

- Do not give out any information. Hang up immediately.
- Contact TIGTA to report the call. Use their [IRS Impersonation Scam Reporting](#) web page. Alternatively, call [800-366-4484](tel: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.
- Call the IRS at [800-829-1040](tel:800-829-1040). IRS workers can help.