

Phone Scams Continue to be Serious Threat

As April 1st approaches, the IRS warns taxpayers not to be fooled by the tricks scammers use to take advantage of those they target. Scammers use fake names, provide bogus IRS badge numbers and alter caller ID numbers to make it look like the IRS is calling.

With the final two weeks of the filing season about to begin and millions preparing their returns, taxpayers should be alert.

"This is no April Fool's joke. Everyone should be on the lookout for threatening calls from people faking IRS phone numbers and demands for immediate payment," IRS Commissioner John Koskinen said. "These are scams. I urge taxpayers to stay vigilant and remain aware of the constantly changing tactics used by these criminals."

As the filing season nears its end, there has been a surge of phone scams where scam artists threaten police arrest, deportation, license revocation and other threats.

They often leave "urgent" callback requests and sometimes prey on the most vulnerable people, such as the elderly, newly arrived immigrants and those whose first language is not English. Scammers have been known to impersonate agents from IRS Criminal Investigation as well.

Here are five things the scammers often do but the IRS will not do.

The IRS will not:

- Call to demand immediate payment, nor will the agency call about taxes owed without first having mailed you a bill.
 - 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.
 - Threaten to bring in local police or other law-enforcement groups to have you arrested for not paying.

If you get a phone call from someone claiming to be from the IRS and asking for money, here's what you should do:

- If you know you owe taxes or think you might owe, call the IRS at 1-800-829-1040. The IRS workers can help you with a payment issue.
 - If you know you don't owe taxes or have no reason to believe that you do, report

the incident to the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA) at 1-800-366-4484 or report it online at the [IRS Impersonation Scam Reporting Page](#).

- If you've been targeted by this scam, also contact the Federal Trade Commission and use their [FTC Complaint Assistant](#) at FTC.gov. If the complaint involves someone impersonating the IRS, include the words "IRS Telephone Scam" in the notes.

Remember, too, the IRS does not use email, text messages or any social media to discuss your personal tax issue involving bills or refunds. For more information on reporting tax scams, go to [IRS.gov](#) and type "scam" in the search box.

Additional information about tax scams is available on IRS social media sites, including [YouTube](#) and [Tumblr](#), where people can search "scam" to find the related posts.