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agents that have bilked at least one elderly woman of \$2,500.

Aug. 01, 2014



An Austin, Texas, man may have been the target of scammers pretending to be IRS agents that have bilked at least one elderly woman of \$2,500.

Austin resident Kewal Verma said he has been called 10 times in the past six months, including a call Thursday afternoon, by people who have left messages threatening his arrest unless he contacted them immediately to pay back taxes.

Verma, 67, said the calls have come from numbers in South Carolina and Washington

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The scam is not a new one. According to a warning from the IRS issued in April, the agency has received more than 20,000 reports of similar phone calls.

Targets have included the elderly and recent immigrants, the IRS said. In many instances, the caller will threaten arrest or deportation unless money is paid, the IRS said.

The Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration has estimated thousands of victims have paid more than \$1 million to people claiming to be IRS agents.

The fraudulent calls may show up on caller ID as coming from the IRS. Callers will sometimes know the last four digits of the victim's social security number and often give generic sounding names, the IRS said.

In Verma's case, the caller he spoke to gave the name John Austin. Calls from the American-Statesman to numbers left on Verma's answering machine were not picked up.

"Every time we think it is going to stop, another call comes in," Verma said. "Just imagine if you were a senior citizen over 65 and you received such a message. What would be the reaction? It goes beyond simple annoyance. It needs to stop."

If contacted by someone claiming to be an IRS agent seeking payment for back taxes, the agency suggested the following:

—If unsure whether money is owed to the IRS, hang up and call the agency directly at 800-829-1040. IRS workers can assist with payment options.

—Report the incident to the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration at 800-366-4484.

—File a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission at [FTC.gov](https://www.ftc.gov).

The IRS warning also noted that notification of back taxes owed is usually sent first

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