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Verify a few details to process your return. The scan tries to get you to give up...

Mar. 17, 2016



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“These schemes continue to adapt and evolve in an attempt to catch people off guard just as they are preparing their tax returns,” said IRS Commissioner John Koskinen. “Don’t be fooled. The IRS won’t be calling you out of the blue asking you to verify your personal tax information or aggressively threatening you to make an immediate payment.”

The IRS reminds taxpayers to guard against all sorts of con games that continually change. The IRS, the states and the tax industry came together in 2015 and launched a public awareness campaign called [Taxes. Security. Together.](#) to help educate taxpayers about the need to maintain security online and to recognize and avoid “phishing” and other schemes.

The IRS continues to hear reports of phone scams as well as e-mail phishing schemes across the country.

“These schemes touch people in every part of the country and in every walk of life. It’s a growing list of people who’ve encountered these. I’ve even gotten these calls myself,” Koskinen said.

This January, the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA) announced they have received reports of roughly 896,000 phone scam contacts since October 2013 and have become aware of over 5,000 victims who have collectively paid over \$26.5 million as a result of the scam. Just this year, the IRS has seen a 400 percent increase in phishing schemes.

Protect Yourself

Scammers make 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](#). They’ve even begun politely

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to make the call sound official.

Here are some things the scammers often do but the IRS will not do. Any one of these five things is a tell-tale sign of a scam.

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 several bills.
- Call or email you to verify your identity by asking for personal and financial information.
- 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 or email.
- Threaten to immediately 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 or to verify your identity, here’s what you should do:

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

- Do not give out any information. Hang up immediately.
- Contact TIGTA to report the call. Use their “[IRS Impersonation Scam Reporting](#)” web page. You can also 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 know you owe, or think you may owe tax:

- Call the IRS at 800-829-1040. IRS workers can help you.

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