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generally target all types of industry and employers. Recently the IRS received a number of reports from tax preparers that they, too, are being targeted.

Dec. 17, 2018



The Internal Revenue Service and its Security Summit partners are warning tax professionals of an uptick in phishing emails targeting them that involve payroll direct deposit and wire transfer scams.

These business email compromise/business email spoofing (BEC/BES) tactics generally target all types of industry and employers. Recently the IRS received a number of reports from tax preparers that they, too, are being targeted.

The IRS and the Summit partners, consisting of state revenue departments and tax community partners, are concerned these scams – as well as the Form W-2 scam —

could increase as the 2019 tax season approaches.

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executive and are sent to the company employee responsible for wire transfers. The email requests that a wire transfer be made to a specific account that is controlled by the thief. Companies that fall victim to this scam can lose tens of thousands of dollars.

A common theme in these and many other email scams is that they include grammatical and spelling mistakes.

All businesses should be alert to these BEC/BES scams that take many forms such as fake invoice payments, title escrow payments, wire transfers or other schemes that result in a quick payoff for the thief. Businesses should consider policy changes to guard against such losses.

One version the IRS and Summit partners have highlighted in recent years is the W-2 scam. This involves an email impersonating an executive or person in authority, which requests a list of the organization's Forms W-2 covering all of its employees. The purpose of this scam is to allow thieves to quickly file fraudulent tax returns for refunds. All employers, in both the public and private sectors, should be on guard against this and other [dangerous scams](#).

BEC/BES email examples

Here are examples of emails that have been reported by tax professionals to the IRS in recent days. These emails have been edited by the IRS:

From: [REMOVED]

Sent: Monday, December 10, 2018 [REMOVED]

To: [REMOVED]

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Sent from my iPhone

The wire transfer scam is similar:

———— *Original message* ————

From: [REMOVED]

Date: 12/10/18 [REMOVED]

To: [REMOVED]

Subject: ACH Payment Attention

[REMOVED],

Please confirm the receipt of my message, Authorized can you handle domestic transfer payment now?

Thanks you.

[REMOVED]

Sent from my iPhone

Where to send the BEC/BES emails

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Because of the dangers to tax administration posed by the Form W-2 scam, the IRS set up a reporting process for employers. Employers who fall victim to the W-2 scam should report it at datatloss@irs.gov. There is a process employers can follow at [Form W-2/SSN Data Theft: Information for Businesses and Payroll Service Providers](#). Employers who receive the W-2 scam email but do not fall victim should forward the email to phishing@irs.gov.

Payroll

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