

Scam Phone Calls Continue; IRS Unveils New Video to Warn Taxpayers

WASHINGTON — As incidents of an aggressive telephone scam continue across the country, the Internal Revenue Service unveiled a new YouTube video with a renewed warning to taxpayers not to be fooled by imposters posing as tax agency representatives.

The new Tax Scams video describes some basic tips to help protect taxpayers from tax scams.

These callers may demand money or may say you have a refund due and try to trick you into sharing private information. These con artists can sound convincing when they call. They may know a lot about you, and they usually alter the caller ID to make it look like the IRS is calling. They use fake names and bogus IRS identification badge numbers. If you don't answer, they often leave an "urgent" callback request.

"In recent weeks, we continue to see these telephone scams in every part of the country," IRS Commissioner John Koskinen said. "We have formal processes in place for people with tax issues. The IRS respects taxpayer rights, and these angry, shake-down calls are clear warning signs of fraud. This is not how we do business. We urge people to be careful when they get these threatening phone calls."

The IRS reminds people that they can know pretty easily when a supposed IRS caller is a fake. Here are five 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:

1. Call to demand immediate payment, nor will the agency call about taxes owed without first having mailed you a bill.
2. Demand that you pay taxes without giving you the opportunity to question or appeal the amount they say you owe.
3. Require you to use a specific payment method for your taxes, such as a prepaid debit card.
4. Ask for credit or debit card numbers over the phone.
5. 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 at www.tigta.gov.
- If you've been targeted by this scam, also contact the Federal Trade Commission and use their "FTC Complaint Assistant" at FTC.gov. Please add "IRS Telephone Scam" to the comments of your complaint.

Remember, too, the IRS does not use email, text messages or any social media to discuss your personal tax issue. For more information on reporting tax scams, go to www.irs.gov and type "scam" in the search box.

Additional information about tax scams is available on IRS social media sites, including YouTube <http://www.youtube.com/user/irsvideos> and Tumblr <http://internalrevenueservice.tumblr.com>, where people can search "scam" to find all the scam-related posts.

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