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IRS Renews Phone Scam Warning

IRS Special Edition Tax Tip 2014-10, April 14, 2014

The IRS today renewed its Oct. 2013 warning about a pervasive phone scam that continues to target people across the nation, including recent immigrants. The Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration called it the largest scam of its kind. As of March 20, TIGTA reported that it has received reports of over 20,000 contacts related to this scam. TIGTA also stated that thousands of victims have paid over \$1 million to fraudsters claiming to be from the IRS.

In this scam, the thief poses as the IRS and makes an unsolicited call to their target. The caller tells the victim they owe taxes to the IRS. They demand that the victim pay the money immediately with a pre-loaded debit card or wire transfer. The caller often threatens the victim with arrest, deportation or suspension of a business or driver's license. In many cases, the caller becomes hostile and insulting. Thieves who run this scam often:

- Use common names and fake IRS badge numbers.
- Know the last four digits of the victim's Social Security Number.
- Make caller ID appear as if the IRS is calling.
- Send bogus IRS e-mails to support the bogus calls.
- Call a second time claiming to be the police or department of motor vehicles. The caller ID again appears to support their claim.

If you get a call from someone who claims to be with the IRS asking you to pay back taxes, here's what you should do:

- If you owe, or think you might owe federal taxes, hang up and call the IRS at 800-829-1040. IRS workers can help you with your payment questions.
- If you don't owe taxes, call and report the incident to the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration at 800-366-4484.
- You can also file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission at FTC.gov. Add "IRS Telephone Scam" to the comments in your complaint.

Here are a few warning signs so you can protect yourself and avoid becoming a victim of these crimes:

- Be wary of any unexpected phone or email communication allegedly from the IRS.
- Don't fall for phone and phishing email scams that use the IRS as a lure. Thieves often pose as the IRS using a bogus refund or warnings to pay past-due taxes.
- The IRS usually first contacts people by mail – not by phone – about unpaid taxes.
- The IRS won't ask for payment using a pre-paid debit card or wire transfer. The IRS also won't ask for a credit card number over the phone.
- The IRS doesn't initiate contact with taxpayers by email to request personal or financial information. This includes any type of e-communication, such as text messages and social media channels.
- The IRS doesn't ask for PINs, passwords or similar confidential information for credit card, bank or other accounts.

The IRS urges you to be vigilant against the many different types of tax scams. Their common goal is to steal your money, and often to steal your identity. Visit the genuine IRS website, IRS.gov, for more on what you should do to avoid becoming a victim.

Additional IRS Resources:

- [IRS Warns of Pervasive Telephone Scam](#)
- [TIGTA - IRS Impersonation Scam Reporting](#)
- [TIGTA Warns of "Largest Ever" Phone Fraud Scam Targeting Taxpayers](#)
- [Identity Protection](#)
- [Report Phishing](#)
- [Don't Fall for the Dirty Dozen Tax Scams](#)
- [FTC Complaint Assistant](#)

IRS YouTube Videos:

- Tax Scams – [English](#) | [Spanish](#) | [ASL](#)
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