

Protecting Your Finances

Fighting Tax Scam Phone Fraud Four Ways

(NAPS)—The Internal Revenue Service has a warning for many Americans (and it's not about paying your taxes).

Instead, the agency has tips on how to protect yourself from telephone scam artists calling and pretending to be with the IRS.

These callers may demand money or say you have a refund due and try to trick you into sharing private information. The 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.

"We urge people not to be deceived by these threatening phone calls," said IRS Commissioner John Koskinen. "We have formal processes in place for people with tax issues. The IRS respects taxpayer rights, and these angry shakedown calls are not how we do business."

What To Watch For

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**:

- Call to demand immediate payment or call about taxes owed without first having mailed you a bill.
- 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.
- Threaten to bring in the police or other law-enforcement groups to have you arrested for not paying.

What To Do

If you get a phone call from



The IRS does not use unsolicited e-mail, text messages or any social media to discuss your personal tax issues. Don't be fooled by scam artists.

someone claiming to be from the IRS and asking for money, here are four things you can **do**:

1. If you know you owe taxes or think you might, call the IRS at (800) 829-1040.
2. 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 (800) 366-4484 or at www.tigta.gov. You can also file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission's "FTC Complaint Assistant" at FTC.gov. Add "IRS Telephone Scam" to the comments of your complaint.
3. Get help from a licensed tax professional. Enrolled agents (EAs) are America's tax experts. They are the only federally licensed tax practitioners who specialize in taxation and also have unlimited rights to represent taxpayers before the IRS. If you are audited by the IRS, an EA can advocate on your behalf.
4. Learn more, including how to find an EA nearby, from the National Association of Enrolled Agents at www.naea.org and (800) 424-4339.

Did You Know?

Enrolled agents are the only federally licensed tax practitioners who have unlimited rights to represent taxpayers before the IRS. Learn more, including how to find an EA nearby, from the National Association of Enrolled Agents at www.naea.org and (800) 424-4339.

Lead-in copy for online posting

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