

Tax Scams Harder To Identify

The Internal Revenue Service issued a consumer alert today to help taxpayers protect themselves from scam artists pretending to be from the IRS.

“If you get an unexpected phone call or e-mail from someone claiming to be from the IRS and making aggressive threats if you don't pay immediately, you should assume it's a scam,” said IRS spokesman Michael Devine. “The IRS will mail a written notification of any tax problem, not initiate contact by phone or email.”

But the IRS says as more people have learned of the scam calls, criminals have started mailing or faxing falsified forms, notices and letters to taxpayers.

“Taxpayers need to know fraudsters have started sending fake documents to trick taxpayers into sending money or ‘verifying’ their personal information that is then used to commit refund fraud,” said Devine.

What if you get an e-mail from the IRS that tells you to open an attachment or visit a web site?

“It's a scam! The IRS does not use email, text messages or any social media to discuss your personal tax issue,” said Devine. “We receive thousands of reports every year from taxpayers who receive emails claiming to be from the IRS. Don't reply, open any attachments or click on any links. You should forward the email to phishing@irs.gov and then delete it.”

The IRS says to scrutinize any written correspondence you receive and just because the IRS website is provided or a form is listed on the IRS website does not mean what you received is legitimate.

“The bottom line is if you receive an unexpected call, fax or letter claiming to be from the IRS, be suspicious,” said Devine. “The first thing you should do is call the IRS at our toll-free number, 800-829-1040, to see if the IRS is really trying to contact you.”

For more information on reporting tax scams, go to [IRS.gov](http://www.irs.gov) and type “scam” in the search box.

IRS Summertime Tax Tip 2015-01, *Ten Things to Know about Identity Theft and Your Taxes* <http://www.irs.gov/uac/Ten-Things-to-Know-about-Identity-Theft-and-Your-Taxes> .

Additional information about tax scams are available on IRS social media sites, including YouTube <http://youtu.be/UHlxTX4rTRU?list=PL2A3E7A9BD8A8D41D> and Tumblr <http://internalrevenueservice.tumblr.com> where people can search “scam” to find all the scam-related posts.