



Phone Scams Pose Serious Threat; Remain on IRS ‘Dirty Dozen’ List of Tax Scams

IRS YouTube Videos:

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

[Dirty Dozen – English | Spanish | ASL](#)

IR-2018-40, March 6, 2018

WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service reminded taxpayers to be careful with continuing aggressive phone scams as criminals pose as IRS agents in hopes of stealing money. These continuing phone calls remain a major threat to taxpayers and remain on the annual IRS "Dirty Dozen" list of tax scams for the 2018 filing season.

During filing season, the IRS generally sees a surge in scam phone calls threatening such things as arrest, deportation and license revocation if the victim doesn't pay a bogus tax bill. In a new twist being seen in recent weeks, identity thieves file fraudulent tax returns with refunds going into the real taxpayer's bank account – followed by a phone call trying to con the taxpayer to send the money to the scammer.

The Dirty Dozen is compiled annually by the IRS and lists a variety of common scams taxpayers may encounter any time during the year.

To help protect taxpayers, the IRS is highlighting each of these scams on 12 consecutive days to help raise awareness. The IRS also urges taxpayers to help protect themselves against identity theft by reviewing safety tips prepared the [Security Summit](#), a collaborative effort between the IRS, states and the private-sector tax community.

How Do the Scams Work?

Con artists make unsolicited calls claiming to be IRS officials. They demand that the victim pay a bogus tax bill. They convince the victim to send cash, usually through a wire transfer or a prepaid debit card or gift card. They may also leave "urgent" callback requests through phone "robo-calls," or send a phishing email.

Many phone scams use threats to intimidate and bully a victim into paying. They may even threaten to arrest, deport or revoke the driver's license of their victim if they don't get the money.

Scammers often alter caller ID numbers to make it look like the IRS or another agency is calling. The callers use IRS employee titles and fake badge numbers to appear legitimate. They may use the victim's name, address and other personal information to make the call sound official.

The IRS also reminded taxpayers today that scammers change tactics. Aggressive and threatening phone calls by criminals impersonating IRS agents remain a major threat to taxpayers, but variations of the IRS impersonation scam continue year-round and they tend to peak when scammers find prime opportunities to strike.

The Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA) reports they have become aware of over 12,716 victims who have collectively paid over \$63 million as a result of phone scams since October 2013.

Here are some things the scammers often do, but the IRS will not do. Taxpayers should remember that any one of these is a tell-tale sign of a scam.

The IRS Will Never:

Call to demand immediate payment using a specific payment method such as a prepaid debit card, gift card or wire transfer. Generally, the IRS will first mail a bill to any taxpayer who owes taxes.

- Threaten to immediately bring in local police or other law-enforcement groups to have the taxpayer arrested for not paying.
- Demand that taxes be paid without giving taxpayers the opportunity to question or appeal the amount owed.
- Ask for credit or debit card numbers over the phone.
- Call you about an unexpected refund.

For Taxpayers Who Don't Owe Taxes or Don't Think They Do:

- Do not give out any information. Hang up immediately.
- Contact TIGTA to report the call. Use their [IRS Impersonation Scam Reporting](#) web page. Alternatively, call 800-366-4484.
- Report it to the Federal Trade Commission. Use the "[FTC Complaint Assistant](#)" on [FTC.gov](#). Please add "IRS Telephone Scam" in the notes.

For Those Who Owe Taxes or Think They Do:

- Call the IRS at 800-829-1040. IRS workers can help.

Stay alert to scams that use the IRS as a lure. Tax scams can happen any time of year, not just at tax time. For more information visit [Tax Scams and Consumer Alerts](#) on [IRS.gov](#).

Taxpayers have a set of fundamental rights they should be aware of when dealing with the IRS. These are the [Taxpayer Bill of Rights](#). Explore these rights and the agency's obligations to protect them on [IRS.gov](#).