



Sheriff warns residents of IRS scams

With tax season in full swing Sheriff Jamie Patton is warning taxpayers to watch out for scam artists trying to steal your money or your identity – or both.

The Internal Revenue Service is warning taxpayers of several scams that are known to surface this time of the year.

- 1) **Phone Scams:** Taxpayers are still getting threatening phone calls by criminals impersonating IRS agents. Scam artists are threatening police arrest, deportation, and license revocation. Scam artist's claim their intended victim owe unpaid taxes, then demand immediate payment via a prepaid debit card or wire transfer. With the technology in today's society the scam artists are able to disguise their phone number to make it look like they are calling from the IRS.
- 2) **Identity Theft:** Scam artist will use the IRS name and logo to appear legitimate, then they collect personal information. After collecting your personal information the Scam artist then open new accounts using the victims information or steal from existing bank accounts. Scam artist also use the victim's personal information to file a tax return.
- 3) **Fraudulent Tax Return Services:** There are a lot of different companies that provide tax services, while most companies provide honest service. But there are some companies who take advantage of taxpayers to skim off the victims refunds or inflate fees. Make sure the preparer is putting their Preparer Tax Identification on each form. This is recommended by the IRS. Be on the lookout for preparers that charge a percentage of the refund as a preparation fee and not signing the returns. Also promise a larger refund than normal.
- 4) **Phisherman :** Scam involving emails or text message appearing to be from the agency, instructing you to "update your IRS e-file immediately." It will give you a link to click on. This is just another way for the scam artist to get your personal information.

The IRS reminds taxpayers to claim their refunds through the filing on their annual tax returns and also recommends that recipients do not click on links in, or open any attachments to, emails they receive that are unsolicited or that come from unknown sources. The IRS does not send out unsolicited emails or ask for detailed personal and financial information. Sheriff Patton also adds that the IRS will never ask for PIN numbers, passwords or similar access information for their credit card, bank or other financial institution. "This information should never be asked for by any legitimate company nor should it ever be given out", says Patton.

Residents are encouraged to call the Sheriff's Office or their local Police Department if they should have questions or concerns about a suspicious phone call, letter or e-mail correspondence.

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