

Fraud and Scam Series

#2- Tax and IRS Scams

With the tax season upon us and with the additional focus on stimulus money, specific scams are on the rise. Every year we see an increase in IRS and Tax scams and now we want you to be aware of added stimulus and vaccine scams.

Thousands of people have lost millions of dollars and their personal information to tax scams. Scammers use the regular mail, telephone, or email to set up individuals, businesses, payroll and tax professionals.

The IRS doesn't initiate contact with taxpayers by email, text messages or social media channels to request personal or financial information. ([source](#))

Additionally, the IRS does not:

- 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.
- Demand that you pay taxes without the opportunity to question or appeal the amount they say you owe. You should also be advised of your rights as a taxpayer.
- Threaten to bring in local police, immigration officers or other law-enforcement to have you arrested for not paying. The IRS also cannot revoke your driver's license, business licenses, or immigration status. Threats like these are common tactics scam artists use to trick victims into buying into their schemes. ([source](#))

IRS Impersonation Scams are one of the most common. Callers claim to be IRS employees, using fake names and bogus IRS identification badge numbers. They may know a lot about their targets, and they usually alter the caller ID to make it look like the IRS is calling.

New Stimulus Scams

- Scammers will try to get private information by contacting and asking for account information to 'initiate a deposit of the stimulus'. Know the IRS already has your information. If you want to verify, only use the IRS.GOV website with secured connections. They may say you need to 'pay a fee' to claim any funds, this is not accurate- you do not have to pay anything to get your stimulus money.
- Another type of scam out there is notification that the IRS sent you a check for your stimulus, but it was over the correct dollar amount and you need to send X back in the form of a cashiers check or gift card. The IRS will NOT tell you to deposit your stimulus check then send them money back because they paid you more than they owed you. That's a fake check scam.

New Vaccine Scams

- You do not need to pay to get a vaccine appointment.
- DO not open emails or click on links in emails or text messages if you do not recognize the person. This could have malware attached.
- Never provide personal, financial or health information with people you don't know.

For further information, use official authorities such as the IRS, CDC, Federal Trade Commission and the CFPB.