

IRS Warns of Pervasive Telephone Scam

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Around the country, individuals are falling victim to a new phone call phishing scheme. This scam is targeting taxpayers, including those who have recently immigrated to the United States. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) issued a warning to try and prevent these criminals from stealing anymore information from unsuspecting victims.



The scam is very well orchestrated and expertly executed. Individuals are calling taxpayers and demanding that they give sensitive personal information, such as credit card numbers over the phone. When one of these criminals calls, the information that appears in the Caller ID is that of the IRS's toll free number. Also, the scam artists are creating false names and badge numbers to impersonate IRS employees.

If the taxpayer does not cooperate, the fake IRS employees are threatening police arrest, license renovation and deportation. Although this would frighten anyone, it is especially threatening to those who have recently gone through the process of immigrating to the United States.

Frequently, the criminals are hanging up on the taxpayers and then another scam artist in their group calls the taxpayer and impersonates a law enforcement officer or someone from the local Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

Also, to legitimize their claims, when one of these criminals calls, there is often noise in the background that is supposed to mimic the sounds one would expect to hear from a call center. Lastly, some of the individuals who were fooled are stating that the

criminals who called them were able to recite the last four (4) digits of the victim's Social Security Number. Because of the success of this scam so far, the IRS has issued a list of signs to look for so that taxpayers can differentiate between a legitimate IRS official and someone who is trying to steal from them. For example, the IRS will never ask anyone to provide credit card numbers over the phone, request a taxpayer to use a pre-paid debit card to pay outstanding debt, or ask for a wire transfer of money. The IRS also suggests that if someone does in fact owe outstanding taxes or have a genuine issue to discuss, to call the IRS's official line at 1-800-829-1040 to discuss it. If someone has not received any notice about outstanding taxes or any other issues, and receives a phone call claiming that there are problems, this person should contact the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration at 1-800-366-4484 to report the incident. Lastly, it is important to report any incidents of this scam to the Federal Trade Commission as well and use the FTC Complaint Assistant at their website, FTC.gov. When filing such a complaint, it is important to add in "IRS Telephone Scam" so that the officials at the FTC understand the nature of the issue immediately.

This IRS scam is not just limited to phone calls. The criminals involved are also targeting people through their email accounts. In certain situations, the scam artists are sending follow up emails to targeted individuals in the hopes that this will provide the added false evidence necessary to scare the taxpayer into giving their information.

This is not the first scam to use the IRS as a scare tactic to steal personal information and money from victims. There are several other scams that involve fake lottery sweepstakes and debt relief options where individuals pretend to be from the IRS. The IRS does not contact taxpayers through email to request financial and personal information or by any other electronic medium - for example, through text message. If someone receives a message similar to the ones described above, they should forward it to phishing@irs.gov and let the IRS know what is happening.

It is important that taxpayers throughout the country become aware of this scam and proactive in protecting themselves and their personal and financial information.

For more information about this scam or for any other immigration matter, please contact Grzeca Law Group at (414) 342-3000 or visit our website at www.grzecalaw.com.

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