

Tax Reminders



- The \$250 deduction for certain expenses of elementary and secondary school teachers was not renewed for 2014.
- If you aren't covered by a health insurance plan, and don't qualify for an exemption, the penalty for 2014 is either 1% of your yearly household income or \$95 per uninsured adult and \$47.50 per child, up to \$285 for a family.

Phone Scams Becoming More Prevalent



Tax scams can take many forms, with perpetrators posing as the IRS in everything from e-mail refund schemes to phone impersonators. Be vigilant of any unexpected communication that is purportedly from the IRS or another government agency. Don't ever give personal information over the phone, through the mail or on the Internet unless you have initiated the contact and are sure of the recipient.

This year sophisticated phone scams have been on the rise. Victims are told they owe money to the IRS and it must be paid promptly through a pre-loaded debit card or wire transfer. Victims who refuse to cooperate, are threatened with arrest, deportation or suspension of a business or driver's license.

What makes these phone calls particularly convincing is that scammers use fake IRS badge numbers and are able to recite the last four digits of a victim's social security number.

Scammers also spoof the IRS toll-free number on caller ID to make it appear that it's the IRS calling. They follow-up the phone call with fake IRS emails to some victims to support their scam calls.

Scammers go as far as playing background noise of other calls being conducted to mimic a call site. After threatening victims with jail time or driver's license revocation, scammers hang up and others soon call back pretending to be from the local police or DMV, and the caller ID supports their claim.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and Federal Communications Commission (FCC) have reviewed thousands of complaints about the scams like this and expect the problem to grow.

The IRS does not initiate contact with taxpayers by email to request personal or financial information. This includes any type of electronic communication, such as text messages and social media channels. The IRS also does not ask for PINs, passwords or similar confidential access information for credit card, bank or other financial accounts, even over the phone.

If you know you owe taxes or think you might, I can work with you in ensuring that you have proper documented contact with the IRS. If you know you don't owe taxes or have no reason to think that you do (for example, you've never received a bill) or receive a call as described above, you may report the incident to the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration at 800.366.4484.

Did You Know?

As of February 28, 2014, the IRS has processed 57,410,000 individual tax returns.

Quote Corner

"People always ask me, 'Were you funny as a child?' Well, no, I was an accountant."

~Ellen DeGeneres