

Tips for Tax Time

It's February - tax time - which means it's time to keep an eye out for tax-related scams.

Thousands of people lose millions of dollars and their personal information to tax scams every year. Scammers use phishing in all its forms - email, phone calls, text messages, and regular mail - to trick us into giving up our information and stealing our money.

Remember, 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.

Call unexpectedly about a tax refund.

Use email, text, or social media to request information from taxpayers.



Red Flags to be on the lookout for:

Be suspicious of ANY emails claiming to be from the IRS or U.S. Treasury, and never click on a link or open a document provided in one.

Don't respond to messages or phone calls about your taxes; contact the IRS directly using www.irs.gov.

Be cautious with possible scams involving deductible donation requests for in-the-news disasters or charitable causes.

Best of all, resist the pressure to act immediately! Take your time, and think before you act.

As always, before you begin:

Update your software, so all internet-connected devices are running the most current versions.

Review security and privacy settings for your online accounts.

Update your passwords.

Include Multi-Factor Authentication wherever you can.

Finish up by backing up:

Encrypt documents that contain any of your personal information before storing them safely.

Protect your valuable documents by making electronic copies so if your device falls victim to ransomware, you'll be able to restore the data from a backup.

You can forward scam emails to the IRS at phishing@irs.gov. For more information, visit the IRS's Report Phishing web page at <https://www.irs.gov/uac/Report-Phishing>.