



Accountants and Consultants

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### Memo - IRS Warns of Phone Scam

This Memo has important information for everyone. Please share this with your networks and contacts.

Please contact me with any questions and to schedule a consultation.

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The IRS is warning consumers about a "sophisticated" phone scam targeting taxpayers, including recent immigrants, nationwide.

Victims are told they owe money to the IRS and that they must pay promptly through a pre-loaded debit card or wire transfer.

If the victim refuses, they are threatened with arrest, deportation or suspension of a business or driver's license. In many cases, the service reports, the caller becomes hostile and insulting.

"This scam has hit taxpayers in nearly every state in the country," said IRS Acting Commissioner Danny Werfel in a statement. "We do not and will not ask for credit card numbers over the phone nor request a pre-paid debit card or wire transfer.

"If someone unexpectedly calls claiming to be from the IRS and threatens police arrest, deportation or license revocation if you don't pay immediately, that is a sign that it really isn't the IRS calling," Werfel said, adding that the first IRS contact with taxpayers on a

tax issue is likely to occur via mail.

Other characteristics of this scam include:

- Fake names and IRS badge numbers. They generally use common names and surnames to identify themselves.
- Scammers may be able to recite the last four digits of a victim's Social Security number.
- Spoofing of the IRS toll-free number on caller ID to make it appear that it's the IRS calling.
- Bogus IRS e-mails to some victims to support their bogus calls.
- 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 IRS offered these tips for anyone getting a phone call from someone claiming to be from the IRS:

- If you know you owe taxes or you think you might owe taxes, call the IRS at (800) 829-1040. The IRS employees at that line can help you with a payment issue -- if there really is such an issue.
- If you know you don't owe taxes or have no reason to think that you owe any taxes (for example, you've never received a bill or the caller made some bogus threats as described above), then call and report the incident to the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration at 800-366-4484.
- If you've been targeted by this scam, you should also contact the Federal Trade Commission and use their "FTC Complaint Assistant" at [FTC.gov](https://www.ftc.gov). Add "IRS Telephone Scam" to the comments of your complaint.

Taxpayers should be aware that there are other unrelated scams (such as a lottery sweepstakes) and solicitations (such as debt relief) that fraudulently claim to be from the IRS.

The IRS does not initiate contact with taxpayers by e-mail to request personal or financial information, nor does it ask for PINs, passwords or similar confidential access information for credit card, bank or other financial accounts.

Recipients should not open any attachments or click on any links contained in a potentially bogus IRS message. Instead, forward the e-mail to [phishing@irs.gov](mailto:phishing@irs.gov).

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