

New Scam Mimics IRS TAC Office

Cross References

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The IRS is warning taxpayers about a new twist on an old phone scam as criminals use telephone numbers that mimic IRS Taxpayer Assistance Centers (TACs) to trick taxpayers into paying non-existent tax bills.

In the latest version of the phone scam, criminals claim to be calling from a local IRS TAC office. Scam artists have programmed their computers to display the TAC telephone number, which appears on the taxpayer's Caller ID when the call is made.

If the taxpayer questions their demand for tax payment, they direct the taxpayer to IRS.gov to look up the local TAC office telephone number to verify the phone number. The scammer hangs up, waits a short time and then calls back a second time. The scammer is able to fake or spoof the Caller ID to appear to be the IRS office calling. After the taxpayer has verified the call number, the scammer resumes the demand for money, generally demanding payment on a debit card.

The scammers have also been similarly spoofing local sheriff's offices, state Department of Motor Vehicles, federal agencies and others to convince taxpayers the call is legitimate.

IRS employees at TAC offices do not make calls to taxpayers to demand payment of overdue tax bills. The IRS reminds taxpayers it typically initiates most contacts through regular mail delivered by the United States Postal Service.

There are special, limited circumstances in which the IRS will call or come to a home or business, such as when a taxpayer has an overdue tax bill, to secure a delinquent tax return or a delinquent employment tax payment, or to tour a business as part of an audit or during criminal investigations. Even then, taxpayers will generally first receive several letters (notices) from the IRS in the mail.

The IRS does not:

- Demand the use of a specific payment method, such as a prepaid debit card, gift card or wire transfer. The IRS will not ask for debit or credit card numbers over the phone. If a taxpayer owes taxes, make payments to the United States Treasury or review IRS.gov/payments for IRS online options.
- Demand that taxpayers pay taxes without the opportunity to question or appeal the amount owed. Generally, the IRS will first mail a bill if the taxpayer owes any taxes.
- Threaten to bring in local police, immigration officers or other law enforcement to have the taxpayer arrested for not paying. The IRS also cannot revoke a 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.