**IRS Scammers and Tax Fraud**

“Our way of contacting you is by letter”

Over the years, attackers have come up with various clever tactics to deceive users into giving them their credentials, money and even their identity. But during tax season, cybercriminals pin their targets down by posing as fake IRS agents. These scammers call up potential victims and demand payment for back taxes.

With IRS scams on the rise, it’s important for taxpayers to be aware of the threats that surround this scam. Knowing how the IRS works, as well as the techniques that cyber criminals use to trick people into giving away their credentials and hard-earned money, can help prevent being a victim. Remember, never give out any personal information and report any suspicious phone calls.

IRS phone-number scams can be very convincing. With the recent reporting of fraud especially around the busy holiday season a large amount of personal information can be stolen. It is entirely possible that the caller will have your Social Security number (or at least the last four digits), your past addresses, or other personal information that makes them seem credible. Scammers have sophisticated methods to display “IRS” on your caller ID so you truly believe that the IRS is calling you.

If there is a problem with your taxes, the IRS will always first send you a letter about the problem. While the IRS may call you if it has already been in contact with you through mail, the IRS will never:

1. Initiate contact with you by phone,
2. Call you asking for personal or financial information,
3. Call you and demand immediate payment without the opportunity to appeal through the mail,
4. Call you and require that you pay your taxes over the phone through a specific method.
5. Call and threaten you with arrest, audit, deportation, or suspension of your driver’s license or business license.
6. Call and be angry, aggressive, emotional, or hostile.
7. Have “the police”, “the Department of Motor Vehicles” or other law enforcement groups call you and say they will come and arrest you if you don’t pay.

As IRS Commissioner Josh Koskinen stated “If you are surprised to be hearing from us, you are not hearing from us. Our way of contacting you is by letter.”

If you know you don’t owe taxes to the IRS and you don’t think the call was legitimate, you can report the incident to the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration at (800) 366-4484 or at www.tigta.gov or you can report it to the Federal Trade Commission at www.ftc.gov. If you receive a fraudulent call, please report it. Combatting fraud is difficult because many people don’t report fraud attempts, while those who fall victim often either don’t realize they are victims or are too embarrassed to report it and just quietly take the loss.

Spread the word especially to the elderly as it cost them an estimated $13 billion a year. Don’t let your family, friends or yourself lose money to a tax scam.