

NARFE Warns Taxpayers to Protect Themselves from IRS Impersonation and Phishing Scams

Dover, DE — Kathy Adams, President of the Delaware Federation, today issued a warning that scammers continue to prey on hard-working taxpayers by impersonating the IRS and others with fake phone calls and emails. Taxpayers should know the telltale signs of a scam and tips to protect themselves from a variety of phone scams and phishing emails.

These scam artists frequently masquerade as being from the IRS, a tax company and sometimes even a state tax collection agency. By email, they try enticing people to click on links with official looking messages containing questions related to their tax refund. By phone, many scams use threats to intimidate and bully people into paying a tax bill. They may even threaten to arrest, deport or revoke the driver's license of their victim if they don't get the money.

There are some important reminders for taxpayers in Delaware about these schemes:

1. Watch Out for Threatening Phone Calls

We've heard reports in our area about scammers making unsolicited calls claiming to be IRS officials. They demand that the victim pay a bogus tax bill. They con the victim into sending cash, usually through a prepaid debit card or wire transfer. They may also leave "urgent" callback requests through phone "robo-calls," or via a phishing e-mail.

Scammers often alter caller ID numbers to make it look like the IRS or another agency is calling. The callers use IRS titles and fake badge numbers to appear legitimate. They may use the victim's name, address and other personal information to make the call sound official.

2. NARFE Reminds Taxpayers That the IRS Will Never:

- Call to demand immediate payment over the phone, nor will the agency call about taxes owed without first having mailed you a bill.
- Demand that you pay taxes without giving you the opportunity to question or appeal the amount they say you owe.
- Require you to use a specific payment method for your taxes, such as a prepaid debit card.
- Ask for credit or debit card numbers over the phone.
- Threaten to bring in local police or other law-enforcement groups to have you arrested for not paying.

If you get a phone call from someone claiming to be from the IRS and asking for money and you don't owe taxes, here's what you should do:

- Do not give out any information. Hang up immediately.
- Contact TIGTA to report the call. Use their “[IRS Impersonation Scam Reporting](#)” web page or call 800-366-4484
- Report it to the Federal Trade Commission. Use the “[FTC Complaint Assistant](#)” on [FTC.gov](#). Please add “IRS Telephone Scam” in the notes.
- If you think you might owe taxes, call the IRS directly at 1-800-829-1040.

3. Avoid e-mail phishing attempts –

There has been a surge in e-mail scams this year that appear to be from a tax agency or a tax software company.

Never reply to emails, texts or pop-up messages asking for your personal, tax or financial information. One common trick by criminals is to impersonate a business such as your financial institution, tax software provider or the IRS, asking you to update your account and providing a link. For small business, these schemes may try impersonating a company leader and request payroll and human resource information for employees in your company. Never click on links even if they seem to be from organizations you trust. Go directly to the organization’s website.

And if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. If you see an email that says ‘You won a free cruise’ or ‘The IRS has a refund waiting for you,’ odds are high that it is a phishing attempt looking to get your personal information.

If you get a ‘phishing’ email, remember this important advice:

- Don’t reply to the message.
- Don’t give out your personal or financial information.
- Forward the email to phishing@irs.gov. Then delete it.
- Don’t open any attachments or click on any links. They may have malicious code that will infect your computer.

More information on how to report phishing or phone scams is available on [IRS.gov](#).