



Watch Out for Tax Scams!

Tax season may have just begun, but tax scammers are hard at work all year long! In fact, tax identity theft and scams are now reported more than any other scam.

IRS Imposter Scams - Scammers posing as IRS officials call and say you owe taxes. They threaten to arrest or deport you, revoke your license, or even shut down your business if you don't pay right away. They may know your Social Security number (or at least the last four digits of it), making you think the call is legit. They also can rig caller ID to make it look like the call is coming from the IRS.

You're told to wire money or put the money on a prepaid debit card and tell them the number. Once you do, the money is gone. The IRS doesn't ask people to pay with prepaid debit cards or wire transfers, and doesn't ask for credit card numbers over the phone.

If you owe, or think you owe, federal taxes, call the IRS at 800-829-1040 or go to www.irs.gov. The IRS generally contacts people about unpaid taxes by mail, not by phone. But, crooks have also been known to send letters that appear to be from the IRS so it's also a good idea to verify them with IRS before taking action.

Tax Identity Theft – Other crooks file phony tax returns using your stolen personal information (like Social Security numbers) to get a tax refund from the IRS. Or, they may use your Social Security number to get a job or claim your child as a dependent on a tax return.

Tax identity theft victims typically find out about the crime when they get a letter from the IRS saying that more than one tax return was filed in their name, or receive IRS records that show they received wages from an employer they don't know. If you get a letter like this, don't panic. Contact the IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit at 1-800-908-4490. Learn more at ftc.gov/taxidtheft.

For more information or to obtain this factsheet in an alternative format, contact the Office of Consumer Affairs at 410-313-6420 (voice/relay) or email us at consumer@howardcountymd.gov.