

All taxpayers should know the telltale signs of common tax scams

Every year scammers add new twists to well-known [tax-related scams](#) and 2020 is no exception.

Taxpayers should remember that the IRS generally first mails a bill to a taxpayer who owes taxes. There are special circumstances when the IRS will call or [come to a home or business](#).

Here are some tips to help taxpayers spot scams and avoid becoming a victim.

Email phishing scams

- The IRS does not initiate contact with taxpayers by email to request personal or financial information.
- For ways to [avoid these scams](#) read tips from the Department of Homeland Security.
- For additional tips, check out [Taxes. Security. Together.](#)

Taxpayers should report IRS, Treasury or tax-related suspicious online or email phishing scams to phishing@irs.gov. They should not open any attachments, click on any links, reply to the sender or take any other actions that could put them at risk.

Phone scams

The IRS and its authorized private collection agencies will never:

- Leave pre-recorded, urgent or threatening messages.
- Threaten to immediately bring in local police or other law-enforcement groups to have the taxpayer arrested for not paying, deported or revoke their licenses.
- Call to demand immediate payment using a specific payment method such as a prepaid debit card, gift card or wire transfer. The agency doesn't use these methods for tax payments.
- Ask for checks to third parties. The agency has specific instructions on how to [pay taxes](#).
- Demand that taxes be paid without giving the taxpayer the opportunity to question or appeal the amount owed.

Criminals can fake or spoof caller ID numbers to appear to be anywhere in the country. Scammers can even spoof an IRS office phone number or the numbers of various local, state, federal or tribal government agencies.

If a taxpayer receives an IRS or Treasury-related phone call, but doesn't owe taxes and has no reason to think they do, they should:

- Hang up immediately.
- Contact the [Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration](#) to report the call.
- Report the caller ID and callback number to the IRS by sending it to phishing@irs.gov. The subject line should include "IRS Phone Scam."
- Report the call to the [Federal Trade Commission](#).

If a taxpayer owes tax or thinks they do, they should:

- View [tax account information online](#) at IRS.gov to see the actual amount owed.
- Review their [payment options](#).
- Call the number on any billing notice they receive or call the IRS at 800-829-1040.