



IRS Imposters Continue to Call

From the Office of Minnesota Attorney General Lori Swanson

Criminals posing as Internal Revenue Service (IRS) agents continue to call Minnesotans and attempt to intimidate them into paying money. These criminals use a variety of ploys to extort money from victims, including using fake names, false IRS badge numbers, and even reciting the victim's mailing address or the last four digits of their Social Security Number. The callers may threaten arrest, jail time, driver's license and passport revocation, and other legal action, unless the victim pays purported back taxes or fines supposedly owed to the IRS.

In many cases, it can be difficult to detect these fraudsters, who often call from outside the United States. They use "spoofing" technology to hide the origin of their calls. Spoofing is used by these scammers to make a Washington D.C. telephone number appear on a resident's caller ID, thereby masking their identity and evading law enforcement.

The Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration notes that these scammers make more than 10,000 calls per week. The IRS reports that in 2016 it saw a 400 percent increase in IRS imposter calls.

If you receive a call that appears to come from the IRS, remember that the IRS does **NOT**:

1. Call you without having first mailed you several bills;
2. Ask for financial information, including your credit card or debit numbers, over the phone;
3. Require you to pay back taxes using a particular form of payment, such as a wire transfer, gift card, or prepaid debit card; nor
4. Threaten to have you arrested by local police or other law-enforcement agencies for failing to pay taxes.

The best way to handle such a call is to hang up the phone. Speaking with the scammers may encourage them to call again.

You can report this scam to the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration as follows:

Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration

1401 H Street NW, Suite 469

Washington, DC 20005

(800) 366-4484

www.treasury.gov/tigta/contact_report_scam.shtml

