

INVESTIGATOR TIPS

Beware of IRS-Themed Scams

Tax issues and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) are favorite ploys used by thieves to get you to give up personal data or download malware to your personal computer. A common method used by fraudsters involves sending email, designed to appear as though it is from the IRS, to spark a reaction that will cause your personal information to be exposed.

According to the IRS website, www.irs.gov, “The IRS does not send taxpayers unsolicited emails about their tax accounts.” The website also states that the IRS does not request detailed personal information through email nor does it send email requesting your PIN numbers, passwords, or similar access information for credit cards, banks, or other financial accounts.

The IRS warns consumers to be suspicious of any email that:

- » Requests detailed or an unusual amount of personal and/or financial information, such as name, SSN, bank or credit card account numbers, or security-related information, such as mother’s maiden name, either in the body of the email or via a link to a website that asks for personal information.
- » Dangles bait to get the recipient to respond to the email, such as mentioning a tax refund or offering to pay the recipient to participate in an IRS survey.
- » Threatens a consequence for not responding to the email, such as additional taxes or blocking access to the recipient’s funds.
- » Lists incorrect or fictitious government agencies or is riddled with misspellings.
- » Uses incorrect grammar or odd phrasing (many scams originate overseas and are written by non-English speakers).
- » Uses a link with an especially long address or one that does not start with the actual IRS website address (www.irs.gov). The actual address, or URL, is revealed by moving the mouse over the link. Don’t be confused by internet sites that end in .com, .net, .org, or other designations instead of .gov.

If you receive an email that claims to be from the IRS, you may report it by forwarding the email to phishing@irs.gov. If you have any doubt whether a communication from the IRS is authentic, call 800-829-1040 to confirm it.

A service of the Investigators of Kroll

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