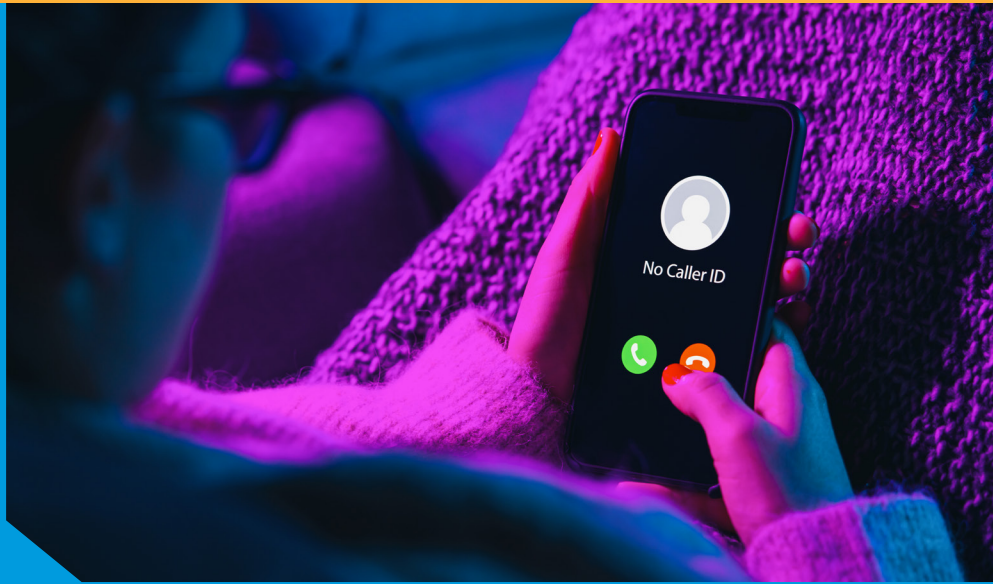


PUBLIC SAFETY BULLETIN: 2022 TAX SCAMS

ANYONE WHO'S ANSWERED CALLS FROM UNKNOWN NUMBERS KNOWS THAT SCAMMERS WORK YEAR-ROUND, BUT DURING TAX TIME THERE'S AN ADDITIONAL THREAT TO YOUR HARD-EARNED CASH - IRS IMPERSONATORS.



Nexstar Media reported that tax time can be painful enough for many of us, but the Internal Revenue Service warned Thursday of some common scams that can make it even worse.

Anyone who's answered calls from unknown numbers knows that scammers work year-round, but during tax time there's an additional threat to your hard-earned cash - IRS impersonators.

Along with the usual text, email and phone scams, the IRS says people should be especially wary of possible unemployment fraud this year.

"With filing season underway, this is a prime period for identity thieves to hit people with realistic-looking emails and texts about their tax returns and refunds," said IRS Commissioner Chuck Rettig. "Watching out for these common scams can keep people from becoming victims of identity theft and protect their sensitive personal information that can be used to file tax returns and steal refunds."



Unemployment scams

The IRS says there has been a "surge" in organized crime rings using stolen identities to steal unemployment benefits.

If criminals use your identity to file for benefits, the taxable money will trigger a state-issued Form 1099-G. If you receive that form and aren't sure why, you should report it to the issuing agency and request a corrected form.



IRS changes: More Americans eligible for Earned Income Tax Credit in 2022

If you find a benefits-related notice from your employer or unexpected payments from a state agency showing up in your mailbox, that's another tipoff that you may have been the victim of identity fraud.

For more details on who to contact and how to report fraud if you think someone has stolen your identity, see the U.S. Department of Labor's website.



Text, Phone and Email Scams

Did you get a scam text message in the last year? You aren't alone. The IRS says there was a flood of text-based phishing attempts in 2021 that referenced COVID-19 or "stimulus payments."

The texts usually contain a link, but the IRS does not use text messages to contact taxpayers about personal tax issues. If you received a similar message via social media, it was likely a scam, as the IRS doesn't use those platforms to contact people.



Should I expect a smaller refund if I got child tax credit checks?

The IRS also reminds taxpayers that they don't ever ask for personal or financial information by email or leave pre-recorded, urgent or threatening voice messages. Beware of caller ID numbers, because they can be spoofed - some crooks may even use a number tied to an IRS office.

The IRS warns not to click on any links or open attachments from suspicious messages, and document any suspicious texts or emails by sending details and screenshots to phishing@irs.gov. You can find more information on the Report Phishing and Online Scams page at [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov).

- Victims of tax-related identity theft should continue to pay their taxes and file their tax return, even if they must do so by paper.
- Taxpayers who previously contacted the IRS about tax-related identity theft and did not have a resolution should call for specialized assistance at 800-908-4490.



What to do if your ID has been stolen

If that happens to you, the IRS has the following tips:

- Individuals should respond immediately to any IRS notice; call the number provided.
- Taxpayers should complete IRS Form 14039, Identity Theft Affidavit, if an e-file tax return rejects because of a duplicate filing under their SSN or they are instructed to do so by the IRS. Individuals can use a fillable form at [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov), then print and attach the form to their paper return and mail according to instructions.

See the IRS or Federal Trade Commission's identity theft pages for more information.



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