



April 2018 Fraud Fact

As we near the IRS tax filing deadline, the Missouri SMP wants to remind you of how to avoid the most common tax scams. Fraudsters use the Internal Revenue Service as a ploy to steal personal information or scam you out of money. Be on the lookout for these con games.

One con is called phishing, with a P. You need to be on the lookout for fake emails or websites trying to steal personal information. The IRS WILL NEVER initiate contact with you via email about a bill or refund. DO NOT open an unsolicited email claiming to be from the IRS. Just delete it, and block the sender if possible.

Also, phone calls from criminals impersonating IRS agents are a threat. Con artists might call you and threaten you with police arrest, deportation or license revocation. DO NOT send them money. Instead, report the call to local police.

You need to watch out for identity theft, especially around tax time. The IRS continues to go after criminals that file fraudulent returns using someone else's Social Security number. Guard your Social Security number to avoid this scam.

Watch for unscrupulous tax return preparers. Most tax professionals are honest, but there are some dishonest preparers who set up shop to perpetrate refund fraud, identity theft and other scams. Make sure you know you are dealing with a reputable business. You also should be wary of anyone promising inflated tax refunds. DO NOT sign a blank return, or believe promises of a big refund if the preparer has not looked at your records.

As always, report suspected Medicare fraud to the Missouri (SMP) Senior Medicare Patrol at (888) 515-6565.

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