



February 2018 Fraud Fact

It's tax time, which of course brings out the scam artists. That means it's time for a little primer from the Missouri SMP (Senior Medicare Patrol) to keep you from being a victim. Thousands of people have lost millions of dollars and personal information to scammers.

First of all, if you are going to file a tax return, do so as soon as possible to keep an imposter from doing it using your information.

Fraudsters use the telephone, email and snail mail to scam individuals.

You need to remember that the IRS will not initiate contact with you by phone, email, text messages, Facebook or Twitter to request personal or financial information.

But, scammers claim to be IRS employees using fake names and badge ID numbers. They may change their caller ID's so that it looks like the IRS is calling. These guys may know a lot about you. They probably found the information by Googling you. They tell you that you owe money that needs to be paid either by a gift card or wire transfer. **DO NOT** do it. They may threaten to have you arrested. They may tell you they are going to suspend your driver's license. They can be hostile and insulting.

They may tell you that you have a refund coming, but **ONLY** if you provide your banking information for a direct transfer. They often tell you the matter is urgent. Some have even gone after deaf or hard of hearing people through video relay services.

DO NOT fall for it. The IRS does **NOT** demand immediate payment using a prepaid debit card, gift card or wire transfer. If you were to owe taxes, you would receive a bill in the mail.

The IRS will **NOT** threaten to have the police or sheriff's office arrest you for nonpayment. The IRS will **NOT** demand payment without giving you a chance to question or appeal. And, they won't ask for credit, debit or Social Security numbers over the phone. If you feel like you are a victim of a scam, report it to your police department.

As always, report suspected Medicare fraud to the Missouri (SMP) Senior Medicare Patrol at (888) 515-6565. SMPs are funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living, Administration on Aging.

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