

eSecurity Newsletter — A Taxing Time of Year

“The hardest thing in the world to understand is the income tax.” — Albert Einstein Even Einstein struggled with taxes, but our goal this month is to help you avoid scammers and schemes as you take care of yours.

PHISHING AND SOCIAL ENGINEERING



Oh, the IRS, perhaps the least understood agency in all of government. This time of year, nearly all of us will have interactions with them. Many are intimidated by the mere mention of these three letters, and feel they must immediately respond to any and all contacts. Unfortunately there are innumerable scams and cyber threats surrounding tax time today. Cyber criminals are sophisticated and employ a variety of methods to take advantage of taxpayers. Here are some facts and tips to help you avoid being a victim of a tax-related scam.

The IRS Will Never:

- Call to demand immediate payment, nor will the agency call about taxes owed without first having mailed you a bill.
- Demand that you pay taxes without giving you the opportunity to question or appeal the amount they say you owe.
- Require you to use a specific payment method for your taxes, such as a prepaid debit card.
- Ask for bank account, credit, or debit card numbers over the phone.
- Threaten to bring in local police or other law-enforcement groups to have you arrested for not paying.

RESPONDING TO QUESTIONABLE IRS CONTACTS

You receive an email claiming to be from the IRS that contains a request for personal information, taxes associated with a large investment, inheritance or lottery.

- **Don't** reply.
- **Don't** open any attachments. They can contain malicious code that may infect your computer or mobile phone.
- **Don't** click on any links. Visit the [IRS' identity protection page](#) if you clicked on links in a suspicious email or website and entered confidential information.
- **Do** forward the email as-is to the IRS at phishing@irs.gov. Don't forward scanned images because this removes valuable information.
- **Do** delete the original email.

You receive a phone call from someone claiming to be from the IRS but you suspect they are not an IRS employee ... Record the employee's name, badge number, call back number and caller ID if available.

- Call 1-800-366-4484 to determine if the caller is an IRS employee with a legitimate need to contact you.
- If the person calling you is an IRS employee, call them back. If not, report the call: phishing@irs.gov with the subject: "IRS Phone Scam".

For More Info on Phishing visit

<https://www.antiphishing.org/>

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