



Consumer Alert

Beware of Menacing IRS Phone Scams!

Tax season is typically the time of year when the District Attorney's Office receives a flurry of complaints about IRS phone scams. Since April of this year, the numbers of complaints have escalated and aren't letting up. One of the most disturbing aspects of this scam is the viciousness of the threats and bullying made by the caller. Reported scare tactics include: immediate garnishee of the victim's wages, issuance of an arrest summons by local police or sheriff, threats of harassment against the victim's family at their place of work, and threats of physical harm to family members if the victim doesn't comply. Although the ploys that are used to arouse fear are very specific, the caller is intentionally vague about the alleged act of wrongdoing committed by the victim. The caller may call back several times or leave voice mail messages, and in other instances, leave what appears to be a call-back number. The actual number that shows up on caller ID is oftentimes spoofed to show the 202 prefix code for Washington D.C. In keeping with the deception, the caller may identify him or herself as a representative of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), U.S. Treasury Department, or other official-sounding governmental agency. In all likelihood, these calls are originating outside of the United States.

How to Respond

- **NO credible company or governmental agency will 'cold-call' a consumer with a legitimate complaint.** If such a concern exists, the agency or business will mail supporting documentation explaining the nature of the concern. If it's a serious concern, the consumer will most likely receive a certified letter. In some instances, businesses may call consumers as a last resort if repeated attempts to reach them by mail have failed.
- Never engage in a phone conversation with the caller. Instead, if you don't recognize the number, let the call roll into your caller ID and delete from there.
- In the event that you are taken in this scam and believe your tax record may be compromised, contact the Colorado field office of the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration at http://www.treasury.gov/tigta/contact_report_scam or 303-291-6108. Also contact the IRS tax-fraud referral hot line at 1-800-829-0433.
- ALL calls should be reported to the Federal Trade Commission at 1-877-382-4357 or www.ftc.gov.