

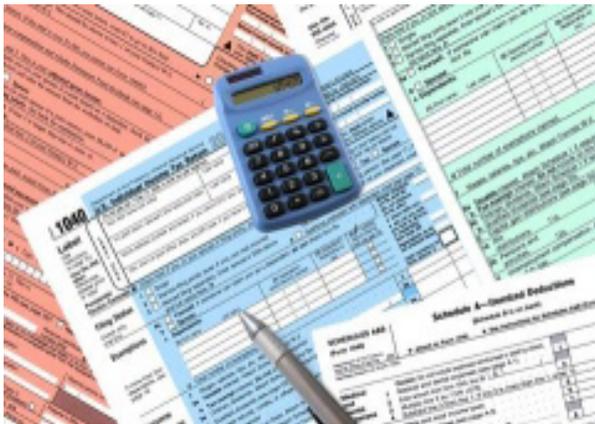
Consumer Affairs Warns Consumers of Tax-Related Scams

As the April 15 tax filing deadline looms, the Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation warns taxpayers about tax-related scams.

Choose your tax preparer wisely. Check credentials. Get recommendations from family and friends. And check the BBB Reliability Report on tax preparation services at www.bbb.org.

Be wary of any emails purporting to be from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Treasury Department or any other official-looking website. These emails are designed to look legitimate so that you will divulge personal and financial information, which scam artists will use to steal your tax refund and even worse—your identity.

If someone calls you claiming to be with the IRS and asks for your personal or financial information, hang up! As a general rule, never give out your personal or financial information to someone by phone unless you initiated the contact.



Signs of a Scam:

Consumers should watch for signs of a tax scam, including:

1. Messages from the “IRS” about a problem with your tax forms;
2. Requests for personal information, such as your Social Security number, home address and birth date;
3. Instructions to click on a link in an email that may direct you to a third-party website (which could infect your computer with viruses and spyware);
4. Poor grammar and spelling errors ; and
5. Threats that you will not receive your tax refund if you fail to respond.

If you receive a suspicious email claiming to come from the IRS, forward it to the IRS at phising@irs.gov. Do not click on any links in the message.

If you receive a phone call, fax or letter from someone claiming to be with the IRS and suspect it is phony, call the IRS at (800) 829-1040.

For more information about tax-related scams and how to avoid them, visit the IRS’ website at IRS: Tax Scams - How to Recognize and Avoid Them.