IRS Warning Americans about "Pervasive" Tax Scam

November 4, 2013 - Last week the IRS issued a consumer warning about a tax scam that it is calling "pervasive". The scam - which originates through a phone call supposedly from the IRS - is actually nothing new but the number of victims has now grown to such a level that the agency is increasing its efforts to put an end to it.

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Scam victims receive a call telling them that they owe on their taxes and that an immediate payment is required. These payments can be made in a number of ways including direct wire transfer, credit card or preloaded cash card.

The caller may tell the victim that he or she is calling from the IRS, provide badge or identification numbers that sound legitimate and may have the last four digits of the victim's social security number already. Potential victims that don't agree to the payments are usually threatened with things like jail time, suspension of their driver's license or potential asset seizures. If that doesn't work, targeted victims may receive follow-up phone calls from people claiming to be with various law enforcement agencies or their state's Department of Motor Vehicles.

The IRS is warning that recent immigrants to the United States may be especially vulnerable to this scam since they may be less familiar with IRS procedures than most.

The IRS never initiates collection procedures via the phone. Tax notices are always sent to consumer via the US Post Office. Anyone receiving a collection call from someone claiming to be with the IRS is urged to hang-up immediately and then report the incident.

Suspected scams can be reported directly to the IRS by calling 800-829-1040. Alternatively, consumers can make reports with the Treasury Department's Inspector General at 800-366-4484 or with the FTC at www.ftc.gov. When making reports via the FTC website, the IRS is requesting that consumers include the words "IRS Telephone Scam" in the comment section of their filing.
byJim Malmberg
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