



FRAUD ALERT!



Important Phone Scam Information

Be cautious when receiving phone calls from individuals claiming they are with utility companies, financial institutions, or the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

These callers may advise you that you owe money, are subject to having utilities disconnected, or that you have a refund due in order to trick you into providing private information or send them money. If you do not answer the phone, they usually leave an “urgent” message requesting that you call back.

Following are five things listed on the IRS website that telephone scammers will do that the IRS will not do.

The IRS will never:

- *Call you to demand immediate payment, nor will they call you 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 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.*

If you receive a phone call from someone claiming to be from the IRS and they are asking for money, you can:

- *Call the IRS at 1-800-829-1040 if you know you owe or think you might owe taxes. IRS workers will help you with a payment issue.*
- *Report the incident to the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA) at 1-800-366-4484 or at www.tigta.gov.*
- *You can file a complaint by going to the IRS website (www.irs.gov) and using the FTC Complaint Assistant; choose ‘other’ and then ‘Imposter Scams.’*

Please remember that the IRS does not use unsolicited email, text messages, or other social media to contact you regarding your personal tax information. For more information on tax scams, go to www.irs.gov.



Other scams:

Phone calls from a utility company or “Disconnection Department” stating that you are subject to having your utilities (water or electricity) disconnected unless you pay fees immediately; these calls are usually from an (866) 978-0318 phone number.

Do not provide any information to these callers. Call your utility company directly to find out more information on alleged overdue charges.

You may receive phone calls or emails requesting you to call a number

with the area codes of 809, 284, or 876. The calls or emails state the number is to claim a prize, find out information about a sick relative, etc. The phone numbers are not legitimate numbers for information or for claiming prizes; they are actually to locations outside of the United States, usually in the Caribbean or Canada, and placing a call to those numbers results in high charges on your phone bill. However, one doesn’t realize that the phone calls are to an international number until the statement arrives.

In order to safeguard yourself from falling victim to this phone scam, here are a couple of tips:

- *Only return calls to familiar numbers. Return calls that are to familiar area codes. Directory assistance or your long distance operator can be contacted to verify that the area code is within the United States.*
- *Check your telephone bill. Make sure you are only billed from your provider, or have approved charges by other providers. If your provider for local phone service has changed you will receive a final bill and a notice of service disconnection.*
- *In the event you believe you have fallen victim to this particular scam:*
- *Contact the carrier whose toll-free telephone number and name are on the bill with the charge. Usually the issue can be resolved with a phone call.*
- *If you do not reach an agreement with the carrier, contact your phone service provider. They will work with you and the carrier to help remove the fraudulent charges from your bill.*