



IRS Phone Scam

Be alert!

An increasingly common scam uses the IRS name (and sometimes their phone number) to steal money and personal information from victims over the phone. Scammers will also use similar tactics via email.

How it Works

A caller impersonating an IRS official claims the victim owes back taxes and threatens arrest, jail time or driver's license revocation unless the taxes are paid immediately. Often, the scammer uses caller ID spoofing so that your caller ID box says "Internal Revenue Service," or displays the agency's phone number.

Usually the victim is instructed to either wire money or purchase a prepaid debit card and call back with the serial number.

The Scammer May Also:

- Threaten arrest in order to intimidate the victim;
- Target immigrants and threaten deportation;
- Have information that includes your name and the last 4 digits of your social security number;
- Call repeatedly, leaving "urgent" messages and becoming increasingly threatening and insulting;
- Follow up threats with calls claiming to be local law enforcement or the Department of Motor Vehicles.

The IRS Will Never:

- ❌ Call to demand immediate payment. The IRS provides notice in writing of owed taxes and penalties, and allows you to protest or appeal the amount owed.
- ❌ Ask for payment information over the phone.
- ❌ Threaten immediate arrest or deportation.

If a Scammer Calls You:

- ❌ Do not engage caller: instead, hang up the phone and do not return calls.
- ❌ Do not provide any personal or financial information.
- ❌ Do not wire money or provide a prepaid debit card serial number.
- ✅ Do call the IRS at their published number directly if you think you owe taxes.
- ✅ Do report the call to the U.S. Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration at (800) 366-4484 or [tigta.gov](https://www.tigta.gov).

In an alternative scam, a caller may claim you are owed a refund from the IRS and try to trick you into revealing personal identifying and financial information – which can then be used to commit identity theft.

Resources

Office of the New York State Attorney General

ag.ny.gov
(800) 771-7755

Internal Revenue Service

irs.gov
(800) 829-1040

Treasury Inspector General for the Tax Administration

[tigta.gov](https://www.tigta.gov)
(800) 366-4484