

14-1079

The Secretary of State presents his compliments to Their Excellencies and Messieurs and Mesdames the Chiefs of Mission and has the honor to inform all missions of a sophisticated and aggressive phone scam that has been targeting individuals throughout the United States, including foreign mission personnel. U.S. law enforcement authorities, including the Department's Bureau of Diplomatic Security, are aware of this scam, in which individuals fraudulently claim to be employees of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The following information is reported on the IRS' website, IRS.gov:

About the Phone Scam

In this scam, the caller claims to be from the IRS, telling intended victims they owe taxes and must pay using a pre-paid debit card or wire transfer. The caller often threatens the victim with arrest, deportation, or suspension of a business or driver's license. In many cases, the caller becomes hostile and insulting. The callers who commit this fraud often:

- Use common names and fake IRS badge numbers.
- Know the last four digits of the victim's Social Security number.
- Make caller ID information appear as if the IRS is calling.

- Call a second time claiming to be the police or department of motor vehicles. The caller ID again appears to support their claim.

Be Wary

Note that the IRS usually first contacts people by mail, not by phone, about unpaid taxes. The IRS will not ask for payment using a pre-paid debit card or wire transfer. The IRS also will not ask for a credit card number over the phone.

What to Do

Individuals receiving a call from someone who claims to be with the IRS asking for a payment should follow these guidelines:

- If they owe, or think they might owe federal taxes, they should hang up and call the IRS at 800-829-1040. IRS workers can help with payment questions.
- If they do not owe taxes, they should call and report the incident to the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration at 800-366-4484.
- File a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission at [FTC.gov](https://www.ftc.gov). Add “IRS Telephone Scam” to the comments in the complaint.

Fake E-mails

The IRS has also warned individuals of bogus IRS e-mails that scammers send to support the bogus calls. The IRS will never request personal or financial information by e-mail, texting, or any social media. Individuals should forward

scam e-mails to phishing@irs.gov and refrain from opening any attachments or clicking on any links in those e-mails.

The Department echoes the IRS' urging that all individuals be vigilant against the many different types of tax scams. The common goal of these scams is to steal one's money and possibly steal one's identity. More information about tax scams is available at IRS.gov.

Department of State,

Washington, June 10, 2014.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized 'Z' or similar character, located to the right of the typed text.