

From the Desk of Detective Dave

*New Scams for
A New Tax Season
March 2018*



A new tax scam involving erroneous tax refunds is quickly growing. If an unexpected refund shows up in your mailbox or gets deposited directly into your bank account, do not cash and/or spend it.

Recently, the IRS issued a warning about the new scam after discovering more tax preparer's computers have been hacked and the number of potential taxpayer victims jumped from a few hundred to several thousand in just days.

How it works: The scammers gain your personal information after hacking into a tax preparer's computer system. Scammers then file a bogus return using your identity; have the refund sent to you or your account, then call in an attempt to con you out of it.

The scammers posing as debt collectors for the IRS contact the taxpayers to say a refund was deposited in error, and they con you to forward the money to their phony collection agency.

Scammers will initiate automated calls with a recorded message threatening the taxpayer with criminal fraud charges, an arrest warrant and a "blacklisting" of their Social Security Number. The recorded message provides the taxpayer a case number and a phone number to call to return the refund. It is important to remember that the IRS will never contact you by phone!

If you believe you are at risk of identity theft due to lost or stolen personal information, contact the IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit at 1.800.908.4490. For more written and video information about tax scams and consumer alerts, go to the IRS website at <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/tax-scams-consumer-alerts>.

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