

IRS Criminal Investigation issues 10 tips to avoid falling victim to fraud this tax season

DENVER – Each year, taxpayers’ personal information is compromised through phishing scams or by unscrupulous tax preparers. With tax season kicking off Jan. 24, IRS Criminal Investigation (IRS-CI) wants taxpayers to be aware of tax-related fraud.

“IRS-CI is the investigative and law enforcement arm of the IRS,” said Andy Tsui, IRS-CI Special Agent in Charge, Denver Field Office. “This tax season, we want to remind U.S. taxpayers of the importance of choosing a reputable tax preparer and protecting their personal information from those who seek to exploit it.”

Tips to remember this tax season include:

1. Choose a tax preparer wisely. Look for a preparer who is available year-round.
2. Ask your tax preparer for their IRS Preparer Tax Identification Number (PTIN). All paid preparers are required to have one.
3. Avoid using “ghost preparers” who will prepare a tax return but refuse to sign as the paid preparer.
4. Don’t fall victim to tax preparers’ promises of large refunds. Taxpayers must pay their fair share of taxes.
5. Don’t sign a blank tax return. Taxpayers are ultimately responsible for what appears on tax returns filed with the IRS.
6. Make sure you receive your refund. Your refund should be deposited into your bank account, not your tax preparer’s.
7. The IRS will not call you threatening legal action. If you receive a call like this, hang up.
8. Don’t respond to text messages, emails or social media posts claiming to be the IRS. They may contain malware that could compromise your personal information.
9. Don’t click links or open attachments in unsolicited emails or text messages about your tax return. These messages are fraudulent.
10. Protect your personal and financial information. Never provide this information in response to unsolicited text messages, emails or social media posts claiming to be the IRS.

This year’s [tax season](#) begins Monday, Jan. 24 and continues through Monday, April 18 for most taxpayers. U.S. taxpayers are subject to tax on worldwide income from all sources and must report all taxable income and pay taxes according to the Internal Revenue Code. Taxpayers found to be committing fraud may be subject to penalties including payment of taxes owed plus interest, fines and jail time.

For more tips on choosing a tax professional or how to file a complaint against one, visit [IRS.gov](#). Taxpayers who suspect tax violations by a person or business, may report it to the IRS using [Form 3949A, Information Referral](#). Taxpayers can report phishing emails to phishing@irs.gov or IRS impersonation scams to TIGTA.gov.

IRS-CI is the criminal investigative arm of the IRS, responsible for conducting financial crime investigations, including tax fraud, narcotics trafficking, money-laundering, public corruption, healthcare



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fraud, identity theft and more. IRS-CI special agents are the only federal law enforcement agents with investigative jurisdiction over violations of the Internal Revenue Code, boasting a nearly 90 percent federal conviction rate. The Denver Field Office oversees all tax-related and financial investigations throughout Colorado, Wyoming, Montana and Idaho.

#IRS-CI#