

MONTH | ISSUE |
Feb 2017 | No. 13 | **SCAM ALERT!**

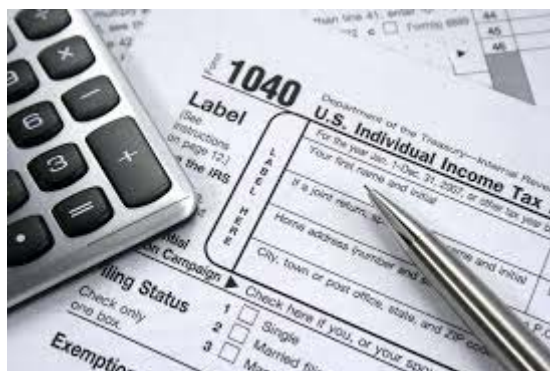
A Consumer Update from Mat Heck, Jr., Prosecuting Attorney



MAT HECK, Jr.
Montgomery County Prosecutor

Don't Let Someone Scam You Out Of Your Tax Return

The IRS saw a 400% increase in "fraudulent activity" during the 2016 tax season and identified 42,000 fraudulent tax returns with \$227 million in stolen refunds. Thieves accomplish this by using the victim's social security number to file a fake return that caused the refunds to be sent to the thief.



Scams Using the IRS Name - Here are some examples:

- Fake emails claiming to contain an IRS tax bill related to the Affordable Care Act. Scammers send a fraudulent version of CP2000 notices that includes a fake CP2000 as an attachment.
- "Robo-calls" with urgent callback requests telling taxpayers to call back and settle their "tax bill."
- Calls from scammers who claim to have your tax return, but need to verify a few details to process your return. They'll encourage you to provide personal (e.g. a social security number) or financial information (e.g. bank or credit card numbers).

How to Reduce Your Risk

- Do not give your social security number over the phone
- Always use security software with firewall and anti-virus protection on your computer.
- Use strong passwords on any site where you might enter your social security number.
- Learn to recognize and avoid emails attempting to obtain sensitive information such as password, usernames, credit card details, or social security numbers, and threatening calls or texts from thieves posing as legitimate organizations like your bank, credit card companies, and the IRS. If in doubt, hang up or ask for a number that you can call back after talking to another trusted adult.
- Do not click on links or download attachments from unknown or suspicious emails.
- Protect your personal data - don't routinely carry your social security card with you and store your tax records in a secure location.

Contact the IRS

Contact the IRS at 1-800-366-4484 immediately if you get a notice indicating any of the following:

- You were paid by an employer you don't know
- More than one tax return was filed using your social security number
- Your attempt to file an electronic return is rejected with a message saying a return with a duplicate social security numbers has been filed.
- You're entitled to a tax refund that you didn't request.

It is important to remember that the IRS never initiates contact with taxpayers by email, text messages or social media to request personal or financial information.

There is no guarantee that you won't ever be the victim of an IRS scam, but if you follow these simple precautions, you greatly reduce the likelihood of it happening.

Make it harder - not easier - on fraudsters this tax season.

The above ALERT is part of the Montgomery County Prosecuting Attorney's initiative to help citizens become aware of ways they can avoid becoming a victim, or ways they can help stop criminal activity that may be occurring. Upon request, the office can provide presentations on crime prevention actions and activities to halt crime and increase the quality of life in our community.

If you would like additional information on the above ALERT, or would like additional information regarding our programs to assist consumers in general and/or seniors in particular, please contact Kimberly Oliver, Supervising Attorney, Adult Protection Unit, or Anthony Schoen, Supervising Attorney, Fraud and Economic Crimes Unit at 937-225-5757.

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