

January
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SCAM ALERT!



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



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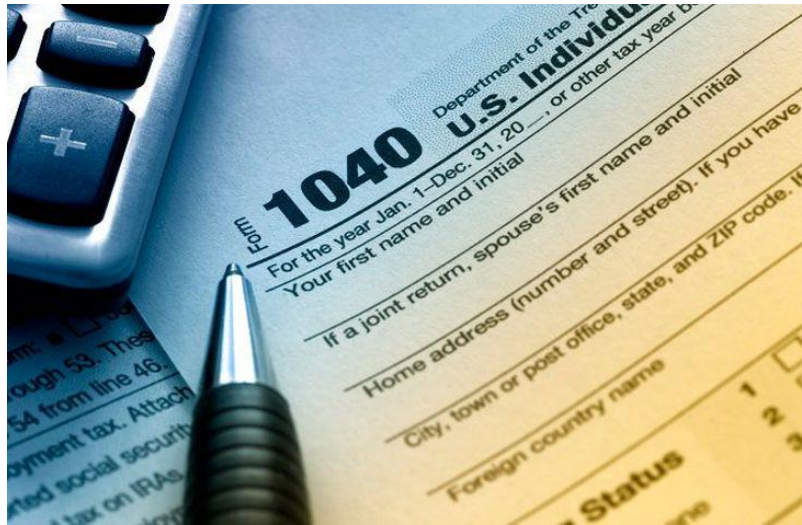
"It's Tax Season - Scammers will be out in force!"

DON'T BECOME A VICTIM AT TAX SEASON

Tax season is here, which means scammers will be out in full force. While the number of successful thefts of tax refunds is declining, this type of thievery is still very prevalent. One way thieves accomplish their goal by using your social security number to file a return but providing their personal information so any refund is sent to them, not you!

SCAMS USING THE IRS NAME:

A common method scammers use is "Robo-calls," with urgent requests that you return their call to settle your "tax bill." These are calls from scammers who claim to have your tax return, but need to verify a few details in order to process your refund. They'll encourage you to provide personal information (e.g. a social security number) or financial information (e.g. bank account numbers or even credit card numbers).



HOW TO REDUCE YOUR RISK:

- Always use security software with a firewall and anti-virus protection on your computers.
- Use strong passwords on any website where you might enter your social security number. Also check that the website address begins with https:// and not just http:// (the extra "s" means the sight is secure and encrypted)
- Learn to recognize and avoid "phishing" emails and threatening calls or texts from thieves posing as legitimate organizations like your bank, credit card company, and the IRS.
- Do not click on links or download attachments from unknown or suspicious emails.
- Protect your personal data - do not routinely carry your social security card. Store your tax records in a secure location.
- The IRS does not contact taxpayers by email or phone to request personal or financial information.

CONTACT THE IRS at 1-800-336-4484 if you receive 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 tax return is rejected with a message saying a return with a duplicate social security number has been filed.
- You're entitled to a tax return that you didn't request.

Report suspicious online or emailed phishing scams to: phishing@irs.gov.

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 Melnick, Supervising Attorney, Adult Protection Unit, or Anthony Schoen, Supervising Attorney, Fraud and Economic Crimes Unit at 937-225-5757.

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