

Tax Scams: Thieves do Not Stop After Filing Season

As tax season draws to a close, many of us try to forget the experience, blocking it from our thoughts until the following April. However for some, those who have been victimized by a tax scam, this may not be so easy.

Every year the IRS publishes a list of what they consider to be the 12 most worst tax schemes and scams. This year, phishing, scams related to the Economic Stimulus payment, tax preparer scams and return preparer fraud are near the top of the IRS's "[Dirty Dozen](#)" list.

Phishing is an internet based tactic where thieves trick innocent victims into providing their personal information. The thieves then use this information to access the victims' financial accounts. Phishing scams often include an email from what appears to be a legitimate source including the IRS. Taxpayers should be advised, that the IRS NEVER sends emails to contact taxpayers about their tax issues. If you receive an email which you believe to be an attempt at phishing, please read the article titled "[How to Protect Yourself from Suspicious E-mails or Phishing Schemes](#)," and then forward the message to phishing@irs.gov.

New in 2007 is the economic stimulus payment and thieves are already changing their tactics. Thieves contact potential victims who may not be aware of how the economic stimulus payments are distributed and using the lack of information to their advantage. The thieves claim that in order to receive the payment, taxpayers must provide personal financial information. If the target is unwilling, the victim is then told that they will not receive the stimulus payment until they comply. The IRS has sent out notices about the Economic Stimulus Payments and Taxpayers should remember that the only way to receive the stimulus payment is to file a 2007 return. For more information on stimulus payments, please read [click here](#).

Finally, every year, taxpayers put their faith in professional tax preparers. The majority of which are qualified professionals. But taxpayers must be on guard when picking a preparer. The key is that if it sounds too good to be true, it is. Be wary of tax preparers who guarantee larger refunds than other preparers and who base their fee on a percentage of the amount of the refund. You, the taxpayer are responsible for all the information on your tax return. If the information is inaccurate, you will have to pay any additional taxes AND interest due. You may also be liable for penalties and criminal prosecution. For more information on tax preparer scams [click here](#).