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# Fake IRS collectors are calling

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by Lisa Lake

Consumer Education Specialist, FTC

This time of year is often *taxing* for many consumers. Scams aimed at stealing taxpayers' money make the season more stressful.

The Treasury Inspector General for Taxpayer Administration (TIGTA) warns that crooks posing as Internal Revenue Service (IRS) officials are contacting people claiming they owe taxes. The caller demands a prepaid debit card, wire transfer or a credit card number for payment. If the person doesn't comply, the caller threatens to arrest or deport the target, or take away their driver's license or business.

Thousands of victims have lost money to these tax scam artists. But there are ways to recognize them and foil their attempts to steal your money.

These scammers often:

- call you. But when the IRS contacts people about unpaid taxes, they do it by postal mail, not by phone
- use common names and fake IRS badge numbers
- know the last four digits of your Social Security number
- demand payment via a prepaid debit card or wire transfer. The IRS doesn't ask for either of these payment methods, nor will they ask for credit card numbers.
- rig caller ID information to appear as if the IRS really is calling
- send fake emails that look like legitimate IRS correspondence
- make a second call claiming to be the police or department of motor vehicles, rigging the caller ID information

To protect yourself from imposters who call, claiming to be from the IRS:

- don't provide any account or other personal information. Hang up the phone.
- never wire money to a person or company you don't know. Once you wire money, you can't get it back.
- if you owe - or think you owe - federal taxes, call the IRS at 800-829-1040. IRS workers can help you with your payment questions. You also can visit the IRS website at [irs.gov](http://irs.gov).
- if you've already paid your taxes, call and report the incident to TIGTA at 800-366-4484.

- forward emails from the IRS to [phishing@irs.gov](mailto:phishing@irs.gov). Don't open any attachments or click on any links in those emails.
- file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission at [ftc.gov/complaint](https://www.ftc.gov/complaint). Include "IRS Telephone Scam" in your complaint.

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