



Recognize tax scams and fraud

You can avoid falling victim to a tax scam. Know what to watch out for and how the IRS contacts you.

Tax scam warning signs

Scammers mislead you about tax refunds, credits and payments. They pressure you for money, personal, financial or employee information. IRS impersonators try to look like us.

Watch out for:

- **A big payday** - If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Bad tax advice on social media could urge you to falsify tax forms or credit claims.
- **Demands or threats** - Impersonators want you to pay “now or else.” They threaten arrest or deportation.
- **Website links** - Odd or misspelled web links can take you to malicious sites instead of IRS.gov.

Impersonators don't let you question or appeal the amount of tax you owe. Know your taxpayer rights.

How to know it's the IRS

Here's how to know it's really us contacting you:

- **Email** - We email you only with your permission.
- **Mail** - Typically, we contact you first by U.S. mail. Most IRS letters include a letter or number. To verify it's us, search for a letter or notice. Some letters might be from IRS-assigned private debt collection agencies.
- **Social media** - You can follow us, but we never contact you about your taxes on social media. Check with a trusted tax professional.
- **Text message** - We only send you text messages with your permission.
- **Website** - Our official web address is IRS.gov.
- **Phone call** - Typically, we mail you first. We might call about an audit or to verify information.
- **Fax** - Sometimes we send a fax to verify employment or request reported income or withholdings.
- **In-person visit** - Generally, we notify you by mail before we visit your home or business.

How to know it's really the IRS

How to know it's an IRS official

Common tax scams

Be aware of the telltale signs of tax scams.

⊕ Charity impersonators

⊕ COVID-19 pandemic schemes

⊕ Credits and refunds misinformation

⊕ Disaster fraud

⊕ Dishonest tax preparers

⊕ Email and text message impersonators

⊕ Seniors targeted

⊕ Social media bad tax advice and scams

⊕ Tax debt settlement or relief services

⊕ Unclaimed tax refund

⊕ Unemployment claims identity theft

⊕ Unexpected tax bill

⊕ W-2 Form fraud