

# IRS Scam Prevention Checklist

## How to Spot Fake IRS Communications

Remember: The Real IRS Will Almost Always...

- Contact you first through regular mail delivered by the U.S. Postal Service
- Give you the opportunity to question or appeal any amount they say you owe
- Allow you to make payments through various official channels (not gift cards)
- Provide you with specific information about your tax situation
- Give you time to respond appropriately (not demand immediate same-day action)

Phone Call Red Flags (Likely a Scam if they...)

- Call about unpaid taxes without having first sent you a bill by mail
- Demand immediate payment without allowing you to question or appeal
- Require a specific payment method like gift cards, prepaid debit cards, or wire transfer
- Ask for credit or debit card numbers over the phone
- Threaten to bring in law enforcement or immigration agents for non-payment
- Use aggressive or threatening language about immediate consequences
- Claim to be able to suspend your driver's license, business license, or immigration status

Email or Text Message Red Flags

- Contains links to websites that mimic IRS.gov but have slightly different web addresses
- Includes attachments they want you to open
- Contains spelling or grammar errors in what should be official communication
- Requests personal information like your Social Security number or financial details
- Creates a false sense of urgency with threats of penalties or legal action
- Has an unprofessional appearance or unusual formatting

## What to Do If You're Contacted

If You Receive a Suspicious Call:

- Don't provide any personal or financial information
- Don't engage with the caller - it's okay to hang up
- Contact the real IRS directly at 800-829-1040 if you're concerned about your tax status

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- Report the call to the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration at 800-366-4484

### If You Receive a Suspicious Email or Text:

- Don't click on any links or open any attachments
- Don't reply with any personal information
- Forward suspicious emails to [phishing@irs.gov](mailto:phishing@irs.gov), then delete them
- Report suspicious texts by forwarding them to 7726 (SPAM)

### If You Receive Suspicious Mail:

- Verify by calling the IRS directly at 800-829-1040
- Check your tax account information online at IRS.gov

### If You Think You've Been Scammed:

- Report the incident to the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration at 800-366-4484
- File a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission at [FTC.gov/complaint](https://www.ftc.gov/complaint)
- If you shared financial information, contact your bank immediately
- If you paid a scammer, contact the payment method company right away:
  - Gift cards: Call the company on the card and report it as fraudulent
  - Wire transfer: Contact the wire transfer company to report the fraud
  - Prepaid cards: Call the card company to report the fraud

### Important Contact Information

- IRS General Questions: 800-829-1040
- Report IRS Impersonation Scams: 800-366-4484
- Report Phishing Emails: [phishing@irs.gov](mailto:phishing@irs.gov)
- Federal Trade Commission: [FTC.gov/complaint](https://www.ftc.gov/complaint)

*Remember: Stay calm and verify. The real IRS follows procedures and respects your rights as a taxpayer.*

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