



## February 2016 Fraud Prevention Fact

It's tax season, and that means it's time for you to be aware of the scammers impersonating the Internal Revenue Service.

According to the IRS, the fraudsters are out in force again this year, trying to get you to give up your personal information and pay them money you do NOT owe. This practice is much like those who pretend they represent Medicare in order to get ahold of your personal information.

An aggressive and sophisticated phone scam is making its rounds. The callers pretend to be employees of the IRS, but they are NOT. They use fake names and bogus IRS badge numbers. They may already know a lot about you, and they can even show up as the IRS on your caller ID.

You may be told you owe money to the IRS, and you MUST pay it with a pre-loaded debit card or wire transfer. They may even ask for your Social Security number and credit card info. If you say no, they might threaten to arrest you. They are often rude and hostile.

Another tactic is to tell you that you have a refund due. They may leave an urgent message on your answering machine.

These people ARE NOT from IRS.

The IRS will NOT call to demand immediate payment or call you about taxes you owe without first having mailed you a bill. The IRS will NOT demand that you pay taxes without giving you the opportunity to appeal the amount they say you owe. The IRS will NOT require you to use a prepaid debit card or other specific payment type. The IRS will NOT ask for credit or debit card numbers over the phone. They also will NOT ask for your Social Security numbers or your Medicare information – or any other personal or private info. They will NOT threaten to have you arrested for not paying.

If you suspect you are the victim of Medicare fraud or abuse, call the Missouri SMP – the Senior Medicare Patrol – at (888)515-6565.

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