

IRS warns of a new tax bill scam

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by

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We certainly understand if the latest IRS imposter scam makes you queasy: it involves a fake IRS tax notice that claims you owe money as a result of the Affordable Care Act.

The IRS says the fake notices are designed to look like real IRS CP2000 notices, which the agency sends if information it receives about your income doesn't match the information reported on your tax return. The IRS says many people have gotten the bogus notices, which usually claim you owe money for the previous tax year under the Affordable Care Act.

It's one of many IRS imposter scams that have popped up. As tax season nears, we'll see more. The good news? There are red-flag warnings that can help you avoid becoming a victim. For example, the IRS will never:

- Initiate contact with you by email or through social media.
- Ask you to pay using a gift card, pre-paid debit card, or wire transfer.
- Request personal or financial information by email, texts, or social media.
- Threaten to immediately have you arrested or deported for not paying.

In the new scam, the fake CP2000 notices often arrive as an attachment to an email — a red-flag — or by U.S. mail. Other telltale signs of this fraud:

- There may be a "payment" link within the email. Scam emails can link you to sites that steal your personal information, take your money, or infect your computer with malware. Don't click on the link.
- The notices request that a check be made out to "I.R.S." Real CP2000s ask taxpayers to make their checks out to "United States Treasury" if they agree they owe taxes.

In the version we saw, a payment voucher refers to letter number LTR0105C, and requests that checks be sent to the “Austin Processing Center” in Texas. But scammers are crafty. They could send messages with a variety of return addresses.

You can see an [image of a real CP2000 notice](#) on the IRS web page, [Understanding Your CP2000 Notice](#). If you get a scam IRS notice, forward it to phishing@irs.gov and then delete it from your email account. [Let the FTC know too](#).

Voicemail from an IRS imposter?

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by

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You get a call or voicemail from someone claiming to be from the IRS. You’re being sued and this your final notice, the caller says.

Don’t panic. And don’t return the call. It’s a scam.

Here are a few facts about the IRS to keep in mind if you get a similar call:

- If the IRS needs to contact you, they’ll do it by mail first.
- The IRS won’t demand personal information like credit card or Social Security numbers over the phone.
- The IRS won’t threaten to arrest or sue you, or demand that you pay right away. The IRS also won’t tell you to use a specific form of payment like a money transfer from MoneyGram or Western Union, a cash reload from MoneyPak or Reloadit, or a gift card from iTunes or Amazon. Scammers ask you to use those ways to pay because they’re hard to track or cancel payments.

If you or someone you know receives a call like this, [report it the FTC](#) and the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration ([TIGTA](#)). Include the caller’s phone number, along with any details you have. If you’re not sure whether a call is really from the IRS, you can double-check by calling the IRS directly at 1-800-829-1040. For more, check out this [IRS imposter scams infographic](#). Share with friends and family. They may get the call next.