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Thursday, January 29, 2009

### **Avoiding scams at income tax time**

Wisconsin residents are being flooded with scams from fake IRS employees, according to the WI Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and Department of Revenue.

- *Some people have received phone calls about the economic stimulus payments, in which the caller impersonates an IRS employee. The caller asks the taxpayer for their Social Security and bank account numbers, claiming that the IRS needs the information to complete the processing of the tax payer's payment. In reality, the IRS uses the information contained on the taxpayer's tax return to process stimulus payments, rather than contacting taxpayers by phone or e-mail.*
- *An e-mail claiming to come from the IRS about the "2008 Economic Stimulus Refund" tells recipients to click on a link to fill out a form, apparently for direct deposit of the payment into their bank account. This appears to be an identity theft scheme to obtain recipients' personal and financial information. In reality, taxpayers do not have to fill out a separate form to get a stimulus payment or have it directly deposited; all they had to do was file a tax return and provide direct deposit information on the return.*

### **Older scams continue**

Wisconsin residents continue to receive e-mails which falsely claim to come from the IRS, telling the recipient that he or she is eligible for a tax refund for a specific amount, and instructs the recipient to click on a link in the e-mail to access a refund claim form. The form asks the recipient to enter personal information that can be used to access the e-mail recipient's bank or credit card account.

The Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR) does not send unsolicited e-mails about tax matters to any taxpayer, and no separate application is needed to apply for a state tax refund. Taxpayers can access state tax refund information by using the [refund inquiry](#) at the DOR official website, [www.revenue.wi.gov](http://www.revenue.wi.gov). Taxpayers should call (608) 266-2772 with any questions.

In a new wrinkle, the current version of the refund scam includes two paragraphs that appear to be directed toward tax-exempt organizations that distribute funds to other organizations or individuals. The e-mail contains the name and false signature of the Director of the IRS's Exempt Organizations business division.

This e-mail is a phony. The IRS does not send unsolicited e-mail about tax account matters to individual, business, tax-exempt or other taxpayers.

Filing a tax return is the only way to apply for a tax refund; there is no separate application form. Taxpayers who wish to find out if they are due a refund from their last annual tax return filing may use the "[Where's My Refund?](#)" interactive application on this website. The only official IRS website is located here at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

### **Audit e-Mail**

Another new scam brought to IRS attention contains features not seen before by the IRS. Using a technique calculated to get almost anyone's attention, the e-mail notifies the recipient that his or her tax return will be audited. This is the first scam of which the IRS is aware that uses this to get the victim to respond.

**Paper Check Phone Call**

In another current telephone scam, a caller claims to be an IRS employee who is calling because the IRS sent a check to the individual being called. The caller states that because the check has not been cashed, the IRS wants to verify the individual's bank account number.

For more information, call the toll free hotline of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection: 1-800-422-7128.