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## Five Easy Ways to Spot a Scam Phone Call

IRS Special Edition Tax Tip 2014-18, September 2, 2014

The IRS continues to warn the public to be alert for telephone scams and offers five tell-tale warning signs to tip you off if you get such a call. These callers claim to be with the IRS. The scammers often demand money to pay taxes. Some may try to con you by saying that you're due a refund. The refund is a fake lure so you'll give them your banking or other private financial information.

These con artists can sound convincing when they call. They may even know a lot about you. They may alter the caller ID to make it look like the IRS is calling. They use fake names and bogus IRS badge numbers. If you don't answer, they often leave an "urgent" callback request.

The IRS respects [taxpayer rights](#) when working out payment of your taxes. So, it's pretty easy to tell when a supposed IRS caller is a fake. Here are five things the scammers often do but the IRS will not do. Any one of these five things is a sign of a scam. The IRS does not:

1. Call you to demand immediate payment. We will not call about taxes you owe without first mailing you a bill.
2. Demand that you pay taxes without giving you the chance to question or appeal the amount they say you owe.
3. Require you to use a certain payment method for your taxes, such as a prepaid debit card.
4. Ask for credit or debit card numbers over the phone.
5. Threaten to bring in local police or other law-enforcement to have you arrested for not paying.

If you get a phone call from someone claiming to be from the IRS and asking for money, here's what to do:

- If you know you owe taxes or think you might owe, call the IRS at 800-829-1040 to talk about payment options. You also may be able to set up a payment plan online at IRS.gov.
- If you know you don't owe taxes or have no reason to believe that you do, report the incident to TIGTA at 1.800.366.4484 or at [www.tigta.gov](#).
- If phone scammers target you, also contact the Federal Trade Commission at FTC.gov. Use their "[FTC Complaint Assistant](#)" to report the scam. Please add "IRS Telephone Scam" to the comments of your complaint.

Remember, the IRS currently does not use unsolicited email, text messages or any social media to discuss your personal tax issues. For more information on reporting tax scams, go to [www.irs.gov](#) and type "scam" in the search box.

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