

FRAUD ALERT!

From the Office of Okaloosa County
Sheriff Larry Ashley

Tax Season Brings Scams

Many scams are already circulating regarding rebates, refunds, tax law changes and that dreaded of all dreads...audits. If you receive an unsolicited call or email from someone claiming to be with the IRS red flags should go up. With almost every newscast including at least one story about the economy and how President Obama plans to stimulate the economy it is more important than ever that everyone is aware of these scams.

Rebate Call – “You are entitled to a sizeable rebate for filing your taxes early,” to process they require your bank account information for the direct deposit. If you refuse to supply this information then you will not receive the rebate.

Refund – *Good News*; you are entitled to a “refund” at least this is what the email claims. You are instructed to click on the link to access the refund claim form. The form asks for your personal information for the con-artist to use as they please.

Changes to the Tax Law – This email alerts you of changes in the tax law with a focus on deductions and tax savings. When you click on the link you download a malware; malware is codes that can take over a computer hard drive, giving someone remote access to the computer, or it could look for passwords and other information to send to the con-artist. These are just two examples of what malware is and can do.

Paper Check – “Your refund check has not been cashed,” says the caller. They need your bank account information to send you your refund. In reality the IRS leaves it up to you if you cash your check or not.

Audit – This email will get everyone’s attention and the scammers know it. The email directs you to click on the link to fill out the forms with personal and account information; which they use to steal your identity.

There are a few things to remember to keep from falling for one of these scams:

- **THE IRS DOES NOT send unsolicited emails about tax account matters**
- **The IRS uses the information on your tax return to process your refund**
- **Filing a tax return is the only way to apply for a tax refund**
- **To track your refund go to www.irs.gov and click on “Where’s My Refund?”**
- **Anyone wishing to access the IRS website should initiate the contact by typing in www.irs.gov and not clicking on a link.**

If you receive a suspicious email or phone call the IRS would like you to report this by contacting them at phishing@irs.gov so they may track these scams.



**For assistance call the Okaloosa County
Sheriff’s Office Fraud Line:
850-651-7674**