

Phishing Remains on the IRS “Dirty Dozen” List of Tax Scams for the 2015 Filing Season

WASHINGTON— The Internal Revenue Service today warned taxpayers to watch out for fake emails or websites looking to steal personal information. These “phishing” schemes continue to be on the annual IRS list of “Dirty Dozen” tax scams for the 2015 filing season.

“The IRS won’t send you an email about a bill or refund out of the blue. Don’t click on one claiming to be from the IRS that takes you by surprise,” said IRS Commissioner John Koskinen. **“I urge taxpayers to be wary of clicking on strange emails and websites. They may be scams to steal your personal information.”**

Compiled annually, the “Dirty Dozen” lists a variety of common scams that taxpayers may encounter anytime but many of these schemes peak during filing season as people prepare their returns or find people to help with their taxes. Illegal scams can lead to significant penalties and interest and possible criminal prosecution. IRS Criminal Investigation works closely with the Department of Justice (DOJ) to shutdown scams and prosecute the criminals behind them.

Stop and Think before Clicking

Phishing is a scam typically carried out with the help of unsolicited email or a fake website that poses as a legitimate site to lure in potential victims and prompt them to provide valuable personal and financial information. Armed with this information, a criminal can commit identity theft or financial theft.

If you receive an unsolicited email that appears to be from either the IRS or an organization closely linked to the IRS, such as the Electronic Federal Tax Payment System (EFTPS), report it by sending it to phishing@irs.gov.

It is important to keep in mind the IRS generally does not initiate contact with taxpayers by email to request personal or financial information. This includes any type of electronic communication, such as text messages and social media channels. The IRS has information online that can help you protect yourself from email scams.