



# Rhode Island Department of Revenue

## Division of Taxation

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TAX ADMINISTRATION

ADVISORY FOR TAX PROFESSIONALS  
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### **Individuals and businesses warned anew about scam**

*Callers impersonate IRS or Division of Taxation, seek payment to settle “tax bill”*

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – The Rhode Island Division of Taxation and the Internal Revenue Service have renewed their call for individuals and businesses to be vigilant regarding telephone scams involving taxes.

In such a scam, the caller typically claims to represent the IRS or the Division of Taxation. The caller demands payment for an alleged tax debt. If the taxpayer refuses to pay up (usually via credit card, debit card, or some other method), the caller typically threatens the taxpayer with arrest and imprisonment.

“Neither the IRS nor the Rhode Island Division of Taxation treats taxpayers in this fashion,” said Rhode Island Tax Administrator Neena Savage. “We urge individuals and businesses to be on guard against such scams.”

A taxpayer recently let the Rhode Island Division of Taxation know that she had received numerous such calls. The caller, she said, claimed to be from the “Division of Taxation” (though she was not certain whether the caller was attempting to impersonate the Rhode Island Division of Taxation, or the Division of Taxation in another state).

The caller threatened to call the police, but when the taxpayer said she knew it was not the Division of Taxation, the caller hung up.

The Rhode Island Division of Taxation makes its first contact with a taxpayer by mail – not by phone, email, or social media, Savage noted.

She also said that the Rhode Island Division of Taxation would never phone a taxpayer, demand immediate payment, and threaten to have the taxpayer jailed if he or she failed to pay.

### HOW SCAM WORKS

- 1.) Someone calls you, pretending to be from IRS or Division of Taxation.
- 2.) Caller claims you are delinquent on taxes.
- 3.) Caller asks you to pay up – or go to jail.
- 4.) Caller asks you to pay by credit card, debit card, or other means.
- 5.) Caller may also ask for your Social Security number, other personal information.

## Report the scam

Attorney General Peter F. Kilmartin, who has frequently warned of such scams and advocated for consumer vigilance, said that those who have recently experienced such a scam may report it to the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Unit by calling (401) 274-4400 or emailing: [consumers@riag.ri.gov](mailto:consumers@riag.ri.gov). (Reporting such scams when they are in the area will help the Attorney General's Office to warn others.)

Taxpayers may also contact the Rhode Island Division of Taxation to ask if the agency has had any reason to contact them lately. Call (401) 574-8829, or email: [Tax.Assist@tax.ri.gov](mailto:Tax.Assist@tax.ri.gov).

Savage cautioned individuals and businesses to remain on their guard throughout the year, not only during the tax-filing season. "Just because the April tax deadline is over doesn't mean the scams have ended," Savage said. "Individuals and businesses must be on guard and ever vigilant – whether they are on the phone or online – to ensure that they do not fall prey," she said.

## Another twist

The IRS last week announced that in another twist on the phone scam, criminals are using telephone numbers that mimic IRS Taxpayer Assistance Centers (TACs) to trick taxpayers into paying non-existent tax bills.

The criminals program their computers to display the TAC telephone number, which appears on the taxpayer's Caller ID when the call is made. If the taxpayer questions their demand for tax payment, they direct the taxpayer to IRS.gov to look up the local TAC office telephone number to verify the phone number.

The criminals hang up, wait a short time, and then call back a second time, and they are able to fake or "spoof" the Caller ID to appear to be the IRS office calling. After the taxpayer has "verified" the call number, the criminals resume their demands for money, generally demanding payment on a debit card.

To learn more about the IRS's recent warning about impersonation and other scams: <https://go.usa.gov/xQGh4>.

To learn more about how the IRS does and does not contact taxpayers: <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/avoid-scams-know-the-facts-on-how-the-irs-contacts-taxpayers>

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*The Rhode Island Division of Taxation office is at One Capitol Hill in Providence, R.I., diagonally across from the Smith Street entrance of the State House, and is open to the public 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. business days. To learn more, see the agency's website: [www.tax.ri.gov](http://www.tax.ri.gov).*

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