

# BUSINESSSAFE

*BusinessSafe is designed to aid businesses in protecting the safety and well-being of Florida's residents and visitors from threats. BusinessSafe provides private sector partners with open source information, analysis and resources to help protect their businesses and communities.*

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## BusinessSafe Threat Topic: IRS Scams

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is the federal government agency tasked with collecting federal taxes from individuals and businesses. IRS scams are an ongoing concern, especially during tax season. These scams can impact anyone and can occur over the telephone or through email. There are many variations of IRS scams, and many can be financially and emotionally draining to the victims. For a general overview of variations of the IRS Imposter Scam, visit the [Federal Trade Commission](#) website.

**Scammers may attempt to use others' personally identifiable information to fraudulently file taxes and steal tax returns.** This is problematic for victims because if taxes are filed fraudulently prior to the legitimate filing, the legitimate tax return will be rejected by the IRS. Victims of tax-related identity theft can reach out to the IRS for guidance via their [Taxpayer Guide to Identity Theft](#) site.

- In February 2020, two Miami-Dade County men were sentenced to federal prison for using personal information of over 2,000 students collected from their past employment, as admissions officers, to file federal tax returns without permission.  
[Former Employers Personal Customer Data Snatched and Used in a \\$563,210 IRS Scam](#)
- In February 2020, a Wisconsin man found his W-2 opened in the mail. When he went to complete his taxes for himself, he discovered that a criminal actor had already filed a tax return in his name.  
[IRS Scammers Steal and Tamper with W-2 Via the Mail](#)
- In February 2020, a Kentucky inmate stole more than 1,300 identities to include dates of birth and social security numbers. He intended to use the personal identifiable information in a false tax return scheme.  
[Identities and Personal Information Can be Used as Part of the IRS Scam](#)

**Scammers may call and pose as IRS representatives.** These criminal actors are likely to provide victims with fake names or names of actual IRS employees, fraudulent IRS badge numbers, or state to victims the four digits of their social security number to further validate the scam.

- In January 2020, a Florida woman received a call from what she thought was the IRS advising her that her social security number was being cancelled. The scammer claimed



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the only way to avoid that from happening would be to send \$10,000 in gift cards to resolve the issue.

[IRS Scam: No Specific Form of Payment Will Be Required](#)

- In September 2019, two California women were arrested for impersonating IRS agents in a nationwide phone scam that led to criminal actors gaining over \$900,000 in valuables from victims, to include gift cards and electronics.

[Individuals Posed as IRS Agents to Steal from Victims](#)

**Tips to Protect Yourself from IRS Scams:**

- The IRS will not call and demand immediate payment. The IRS will also not call and ask for credit or debit card information over the phone. Additionally, the IRS will not require you to pay without the opportunity to formally appeal.
- The IRS will not require payments be made with gift cards, prepaid debt card, or green dot prepaid card.
- The IRS will not threaten to have local law enforcement arrest you for not paying taxes.
- If you believe you are a victim of an IRS scam and do not owe taxes, you can report it to the [Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration](#) and file a complaint with the [Federal Trade Commission](#). If you believe you may owe taxes, you can reach out to the [IRS](#) directly to discuss payment options.

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