**Tax Scams on the Rise**

Spring has sprung, and tax season is almost done. This tax season, be sure to protect your personal information and understand how you will receive your refund or remit your tax payment. Fraudsters use the time surrounding tax filings to steal personal information and money. Bankers urge you to be vigilant to protect your finances and identity.

Below are common tricks scammers use during tax season that you should be on the lookout for. Remember that knowledge is power, so stay informed.

**Fake messages**

Scammers may call, text or email you, posing as the IRS – be aware of these fake messages. These messages often include malicious links. Do not open them. The URL may take you to a website that could steal your personal information or install malware on your device. These messages may also include a telephone number to call. Do not call the listed number. Scammers may attempt to coerce you into believing their scam through a phone call – it’s not worth the risk. Instead, contact the IRS directly through their official website.

According to the IRS, they will first contact you by mail before attempting to call you, will not contact you via social media, and will not send text messages without your permission.

**Demands or threats**

The IRS recommends watching out for threats as they are often indicators of a scam. These criminals want to rush you, so they often try to scare victims into paying as soon as possible. If the impersonators don’t allow you to question or appeal the amount you owe, it is most likely a scam. According to the agency website, the IRS will not demand immediate payment using a specific, quick method such as a gift card or prepaid debit card. The IRS lists all methods of accepted payment on their official website. If you feel rushed, take the time to double-check the validity of the request.

**Unexpected tax bill**

If you receive an unexpected tax bill, review it carefully before paying. Letters and notices can be verified utilizing the “Notices & Letters Search” tool on the official IRS government website, or by a phone call to the agency.

When it comes to keeping your money safe, it is always worth it to take an extra step or two to verify information. If you have any doubt, visit [irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov). If warning signs continue, contact the government agency directly. Being extra cautious and knowledgeable will help protect you from scams this tax season.

**About the Iowa Bankers Association**

The Iowa Bankers Association represents Iowa banks and savings institutions. Iowa bankers are committed to the values of honesty, hard work and community service, and have been a trusted resource for Iowans for more than 135 years. Iowa banks offer FDIC insurance and lend nearly $88 billion to help individuals, business owners and agriculture. Nearly 40,000 Iowans work at an Iowa bank, and bank employees volunteer more than 300,000 hours to support local communities each year. To learn more, visit [www.iowabankers.com](http://www.iowabankers.com/).