

NEWS RELEASE



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For Immediate Release

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DEPARTMENT OF TECHNOLOGY AND INFORMATION and DIVISION OF REVENUE WARN OF TAX REFUND SCAMS

Dover – The Department of Technology and Information (DTI) in conjunction with Delaware's Division of Revenue, issues a warning to all Delawareans regarding computer scams, email and fraud related to this income tax filing season.

"Once again, internet scam artists are attempting to take advantage of unsuspecting computer users by tricking them into revealing personal information while posing as the IRS," said Delaware's CIO, Thomas Jarrett. "We want to warn Delawareans not to fall prey to fraudulent websites masquerading as the IRS, or phony emails pretending to provide methods of increasing the amount of your income tax refund."

The legitimate IRS website cites email phishing schemes as more prevalent this tax season. Phishing is a term used to describe a type of scam currently favored by many identity thieves. In this instance phishing involves citizens receiving an email masquerading as coming from the IRS informing the recipient that he/she is entitled to a refund. It directs the recipient to claim this refund using a link contained in the email which sends the recipient to a website. This website is an exact clone of the IRS website and even has an interactive page similar to the legitimate IRS one, with the major difference that it **asks for personal and financial information which the IRS would not request via email.**

The information obtained via these types of phishing activities can be used to steal a taxpayer's identity and financial assets. The identity thieves can empty a bank account, run up credit card charges, obtain loans and even file fraudulent tax returns. The phishing emails associated with the tax refund scams may even have email addresses that include: "irs.gov," or other variations that make the appeal look more legitimate.

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“The Delaware Division of Revenue has not been made aware of any State taxpayer's who have received Delaware State refund internet scam emails,” says Division of Revenue Director Patrick Carter.

“Though we do use email as a communication method, we only contact Delaware taxpayers via email in response to an email inquiry initiated by the taxpayer.”

Should you receive any unsolicited emails claiming to be from the Delaware Division of Revenue pertaining to tax or unclaimed property refunds requesting your social security number or other confidential information, please call the Delaware Division of Revenue at (302) 577-8200 to verify authenticity.

To protect against this type of phishing and potential identity theft, Delawareans are encouraged to take the following steps:

- Immediately be skeptical of any message you receive from a sender that you do not know, or were not expecting to hear from. Verifying the identity of anyone asking for personal information whether it be by fax, phone or computer.
- Never reveal your computer or other passwords, bank PIN's or any other security-oriented code data to any third party requestor. Legitimate organizations do not solicit this type of data via email to you.
- Don't open any email attachments from anyone you do not know. Do not click on links in any questionable email, instead go directly to the website already known to be legitimate.

To report having received a fraudulent email with the IRS name or logo, contact the IRS at their toll free hotline, 1-800-366-4484.

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