PROTECT YOURSELF.
KNOW THE SIGNS OF TAX FRAUD.

WHAT IS TAX FRAUD?

Tax fraud happens when someone doesn't pay taxes owed, gives false information on a tax return to get money they shouldn't receive, or files a tax return using someone else's information.

WHY SHOULD YOU BE CONCERNED?

Tax fraud harms you and your community. It can lead to civil or criminal charges, put your money and personal information at risk, and reduce funding for essential community services.

THIS TAX SEASON:

- ***Choose a trustworthy tax preparer.*** Avoid return preparers who promise large refunds or charge a fee based on your refund amount. A trustworthy tax preparer will also provide their Preparer Tax Identification Number (PTIN) on your tax return and give you a complete copy of your return for your records.
- ***Protect your return.*** Never sign a blank tax return, and make sure your refund goes to your account, not your tax preparer's. Do not file your return if it reports false income, expenses, or dependents.
- ***Be cautious with emails and texts.*** Don't click links or open attachments from unknown senders claiming to be from the IRS. These could be scams that steal your personal information or install malware on your device.
- ***Don't fall for social media scams.*** Ignore social media influencers who encourage you to falsify your tax return with inaccurate income, false withholdings or credits. You could owe a hefty sum to the IRS if your tax return is not accurate, including penalties and interest.
- ***Report suspicious activity.*** If you think someone is trying to scam you during tax season contact law enforcement and the IRS.

Penalties for tax fraud

» **Filing a False Return:** Up to 5 years in prison and/or $100,000 fine.
» **Conspiring to file false returns:** Up to 10 years in prison and court imposed fine.
» **Credit disallowance:** You can be banned from claiming certain credits for up to 10 years.

PROTECT YOURSELF:

- Find a vetted tax preparer by visiting www.irs.gov/chooseataxpro.
- Look for FREE, IRS-certified help from VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance).
- Rely on IRS.gov for answers to questions about tax forms and eligibility for credits and deductions.
- Report suspicious activity online using Form 14157, Return Preparer Complaint.
- If you think you've been scammed, call the IRS Identity Theft Hotline at 1-800-908-4490.

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Stay informed. Stay safe.
Protect yourself from tax fraud.