



NEWS RELEASE

Marty J. Jackley
South Dakota Attorney General

Charles McGuigan
Chief Deputy Attorney General

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CONTACT: Sara Rabern (605)773-3215

Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division Touts National Tax Identity Theft Week

PIERRE, S.D – Attorney General Marty Jackley announced today that National Tax Identity Theft Awareness Week begins this week. Tax identity theft happens when someone uses a Social Security number to get a tax refund or tries to obtain personal identifying information while acting as an Agent of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division has seen several of these scams surface over the past six weeks and expects the number to increase throughout the busy tax season.

“Consumers are working to complete their tax filing requirements and these scam artists are trying desperately to catch them off guard. The IRS does not communicate with individuals via phone call or email with tax filing problems, so avoid clicking links on suspicious email messages or harassing phone calls,” said Jackley.

The most widespread scam involves a telephone call telling the victims they owe money to the IRS and it must be paid immediately through a pre-loaded debit card or wire transfer. If the victim refuses to cooperate, they are then threatened with arrest, deportation or suspension of a business or driver's license. In many cases, the caller becomes hostile.

The email scam is still prevalent as well. The victim receives an email claiming to be from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), indicating there was a problem with their previous tax filing and should click on the link to review the issues. These scams are designed to obtain personal identifying information. Consumers should proceed with caution when visiting websites that either associate themselves with the IRS or have the appearance of the IRS site. These look –alike sites redirect consumers to bogus websites that will ultimately ask for personal identifying information such as social security or bank account numbers.

The official IRS website is www.irs.gov. It is important to remember the official IRS website offers tax information for consumers, but the exchange of private financial information is limited. Use precaution when logging on to the IRS website and double check your internet address to ensure it is correct.

If you have been a victim of one of these scams or need any additional information contact the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division at 1-800-300-1986 or <http://atg.sd.gov/Consumers.aspx>.