

Westminster Police Department

Press Release

Kevin Baker, *Chief of Police*

8200 Westminster Blvd.
Westminster, CA 92683
(714) 898-3315

Sergeant Eddie Esqueda, PIO
Office: (714) 548-3754
Media Hotline: (714) 548-3213



April 2, 2015

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

IRS Scams-Crime Advisory

No, That's Not the IRS Calling. Just Hang Up

Westminster, CA - Phone calls by fraud artists posing as Internal Revenue Service employees and demanding money have surged in recent months—enough so that the IRS named phone scams the No. 1 item on its [2015 “Dirty Dozen” list of tax scams](#).

In these phone scams, the imposter typically gives a fake “badge number” and often threatens to arrest the victim if he or she doesn’t pay immediately using a prepaid debt card. Other threats involve loss of a driver’s license or business license. While such callers originally preyed on the elderly or newly arrived immigrants, now they aim at a broad range of taxpayers.

The smart response if you get such a call: Just hang up. And if the scammer calls back, hang up again, say Eric Smith, a spokesman for the IRS, and Timothy Camus, an official with the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration, a government watchdog known as Tigta. “Often the scammer will move on,” says Mr. Camus.

Next step: Report the incident to Tigta at 1-800-366-4484 or www.tigta.gov. Also contact the Federal Trade Commission through the [FTC Complaint Assistant](#) at FTC.gov, and add “IRS Telephone Scam” to the complaint comments.

The IRS never initiates contact with a taxpayer by phone, email or text message. In addition, the IRS will never call about taxes owed without having first mailed a bill. Nor will the agency require a taxpayer to use a specific payment method or ask for credit- or debit-card numbers over the phone. And unpaid taxes won’t cause a driver’s license to be revoked.

Between 9,000 and 12,000 complaints about such phone scams are filed each week with Tigta, Mr. Camus told the Senate Finance Committee.

Since late 2013, some 3,000 victims have lost \$15.6 million due to these phone scams, with an average loss of \$5,000 per victim, he said.

<http://www.westminster-ca.gov/depts/police/>