

NATIONAL TAX SECURITY AWARENESS WEEK: IRS REMINDER THAT SCAMMERS CAN USE FAKE CHARITIES TO GET SENSITIVE INFORMATION

Posted on December 2, 2021 by David A. Tucker II | IRS Media Relations



The Internal Revenue Service and Security Summit partners today warned taxpayers to be wary of fake charities used by scammers to get money as well as sensitive financial and personal information from victims.

As the holidays approach, people often give to their favorite causes through charitable organizations. Scammers can take advantage of this by setting up fake charities to trick unsuspecting donors into providing not only money, but also their sensitive information.

The Security Summit - a coalition of state tax agencies, the nation's tax community and the IRS - urged people to make sure they are giving to a legitimate charity. This can help protect taxpayer's personal and financial data and help prevent tax-related identity theft.

Donors should always check to make sure they are giving to a legitimate charity and can easily do so by using a special IRS tool: [the Tax Exempt Organization Search Tool](#).

This is National Tax Security Awareness Week, now in its sixth year. The IRS, state tax agencies and the nation's tax industry - working together as the Security Summit - are providing tips this week to help protect people against identity theft as well as help safeguard sensitive tax information that criminals can use to try filing fake tax returns and obtaining refunds.

The special week includes special informational graphics and social media efforts on platforms including Twitter and Instagram through @IRSnews and #TaxSecurity.

The combination of the holiday shopping season, the upcoming tax season and the pandemic create additional opportunities for criminals to steal sensitive information. People should take extra care while shopping online or viewing emails and texts.

The Summit partners remind taxpayers to be on the lookout for scammers and identity thieves who set up fake organizations to take advantage of the public's generosity. Scammers take advantage of tragedies and disasters.

Scams requesting donations for disaster relief efforts are especially common over the phone. Taxpayers should always check out a charity

before they donate, and they should not feel pressured to give immediately.

Tips to help taxpayers avoid fake charity scams:



- **Individuals should never let any caller pressure them.** A legitimate charity will be happy to get a donation at any time, so there's no rush. Donors are encouraged to take time to do their own research.
- **Confirm the charity is real.** Potential donors should ask the fundraiser for the charity's exact name, website and mailing address so they can confirm it later. Some dishonest telemarketers use names that sound like well-known charities to confuse people.
- **Be careful about how a donation is made.** Taxpayers shouldn't work with charities that ask for donations by giving numbers from a gift card or by wiring money. That's a scam. It's safest to pay by credit card or check — and only after researching the charity.

Taxpayers who give money or goods to a charity may be able to claim a deduction on their federal tax return by reducing the amount of their taxable income. However, to receive a deduction, taxpayers must donate to a qualified charity. To check the status of a charity, they can use the IRS [Tax Exempt Organization Search](#) tool.

The IRS, state tax agencies, the private sector tax industry, including tax professionals, work in partnership as the Security Summit to help protect taxpayers from identity theft and refund fraud. This is part of a week-long series of tips to raise awareness about identity theft. See [IRS.gov/securitysummit](https://www.irs.gov/securitysummit) for more details.