

Beware of Scammers Claiming to be CRA

Telephone and email scams in which the caller or emailer falsely claims to represent the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) are on the rise. **Be prepared for these contacts, which are fraudulent and could result in identity and financial theft.**

Some recent telephone scams involve threatening taxpayers and using aggressive and forceful language to scare them into paying fictitious debt. Victims receive a phone call from a person claiming to work for the CRA and saying that taxes are owed and/or that legal action is pending. The caller may request immediate payment by credit card, or may try to convince the victim to purchase a prepaid credit card and call back. The victim is often threatened with court charges, jail or deportation.

Email scams contain unsafe links to redirect you to malicious sites and attempt to obtain personal information. Avoid replying to emails that claim to be from the CRA or clicking on links within the email. If you would like to connect to the CRA online, initiate the online search yourself.

When the CRA calls you, it has established procedures in place to make sure your personal information is protected. Never use a telephone number for the CRA that is offered over the phone or by mail or email. Confirm the authenticity of a CRA telephone number by calling the CRA. The number for business-related calls is 1-800-959-5525, and the number for individual accounts is 1-800-959-8281.

To help you identify possible scams, use the following guidelines:

The CRA:

- **never** requests prepaid credit cards;
- **never** asks for information about your passport, health care card, or driver's license
- **never** uses threatening language
- **never** initiates contact by email
- **never** leaves personal information on your answering machine or asks you to leave a message containing your personal information on an answering machine.
- **never** shares your taxpayer information with another person, unless you have provided the appropriate written authorization; and
- **will respect your request** to hang up and call the CRA yourself (using a contact number obtained yourself) to verify their telephone number or issue.

When in doubt, do not provide the caller with information. Hang up and contact the CRA yourself, or call your accountant.

Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre

For information on scams or to report deceptive telemarketing contact the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre online at www.antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca or toll free at 1-888-495-8501. If you believe you may be the victim of fraud or have given personal or financial information unwittingly, contact your local police service.