

Personal Investor: How to avoid getting scammed this tax season

Personal Investor: Tax season brings out the scammers



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As if tax season wasn't stressful enough, the Canada Revenue Agency is warning taxpayers to be on the lookout for tax scammers.

Several arrests have already been made at overseas call centres but the CRA says fraudsters can come from any direction in many forms – phone, email or text. In all cases, the person at the other end poses as a CRA agent and tries to gather personal information. In many cases, they will make a brazen attempt to intimidate a victim into sending money.

If you are approached by phone, the CRA says hang up immediately. If you receive an e-mail or text, do not respond. The CRA never sends texts.

The CRA never threatens people with immediate arrest or sends police.

Anyone who receives an email from someone claiming to be from the CRA should avoid clicking any links. They're probably fake. The only time the CRA will send an email that contains links is if a taxpayer calls the CRA to ask for a form or a link to specific information. A CRA agent will send the information to the taxpayer's email during the telephone call.

If you are approached by someone claiming to be from the CRA, report it to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre – even if you didn't pay money. If you did pay money, report it to your local police.

If you provided personal financial information, notify that financial institution so it can be on the lookout for unusual activity.

Most important, if the scammers managed to get your social insurance number, contact Service Canada.