



NEWS FROM SCDCA

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

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Fake IRS Calls Top the List of Scams in 2015

COLUMBIA, S.C. – The South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs (SCDCA) received **more than 3,000 scam reports** between January 1, 2015 and December 31, 2015. Over 40 percent of these were imposter scams, where someone poses as an individual or organization a consumer knows in order to get personal information or money.

Seven hundred of these calls were IRS scammers demanding consumers pay “taxes owed,” or face consequences such as arrest or deportation. According to the IRS, since October 2013 more than 736,000 people nationally have reported being contacted by IRS scammers, resulting in \$23 million in losses. With tax season upon us, consumers should be especially wary of these calls. Keep these tips in mind to avoid becoming a victim:

- **Do not give out personal information over the phone.** If you do not know who is calling, do not share your financial or personal information.
- **Think before you act.** Beware of time sensitive offers or scare tactics meant to push you to act before thinking. *Remember, the IRS will not initiate contact about a tax issue via the phone or email. They will send you a letter in the mail.*
- **Hang up and follow up!** If you receive a suspicious call, the best defense is to hang up, and follow up. Call a number you know legitimately belongs to the organization.

Imposter scammers may pose as a grandchild with an emergency, a representative from a well-known business, or even government officials. However, consumers can avoid these and most imposter scammers by using the tips above. If you are the victim of a scam, report it to SCDCA’s Identity Theft Unit (IDTU) by calling toll free 1-800-922-1594 or visiting www.consumer.sc.gov and filling out a scam report form on the CONTACT US page.

About SCDCA

The South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs aims to protect consumers from inequities in the marketplace through advocacy, complaint mediation, enforcement and education. To file a complaint or get information on consumer issues, visit www.consumer.sc.gov or call toll-free, 1-800-922-1594.

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