



# NEWS FROM SCDCA

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

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## **Tax Time Scammers Target Businesses**

Imposters steal billions of dollars and personal data

COLUMBIA, S.C. – With tax season in full swing, the South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs (SCDCA) is warning businesses to be on the lookout for fake email requests by individuals posing as their CEO and other executives.

According to the Federal Trade Commission<sup>1</sup> and the FBI<sup>2</sup>, more than 17,000 businesses and non-profits have sustained \$2.3 billion in losses through fraudulent wire transfers since October 2013. After identifying a victim within the company, fraudsters spoof, or fake, an email to the employee who has access to sensitive employee information, like W-2s or can pay invoices on the company's behalf. The email looks like it's coming from the CEO or another executive.

These tips can help you guard your company against CEO imposter scams:

- Be wary of e-mail requests for personal, financial or other sensitive information and take time to verify the request in person or via telephone.
- Remember – email is not a safe way to send sensitive information. Don't transmit account information or sensitive employee information by unsecured email.
- Establish a multi-person approval process for transactions above a certain amount and sensitive information requests.
- Train your staff on information security policies and how to spot the latest email scams.

For more information on this and other types of business scams, visit [SCDCA's Spotlight](#). Scam reporting is an important step in helping SCDCA empower consumers to recognize and avoid scams. To report a scam, call 800-922-1594 or visit [www.consumer.sc.gov](http://www.consumer.sc.gov) and click Report a Scam.

1. Federal Trade Commission,. *CEO imposter scams: Is the boss for real?* 2016. Online.
2. FBI Phoenix,. *FBI Warns Of Dramatic Increase In Business E-Mail Scams*. 2016. Online.

### **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](http://www.consumer.sc.gov) or call toll-free, 1-800-922-1594.

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