

Fraud Alert!

JULY 19, 2007

IT IS NOT THE IRS – IT IS SOMETHING WORSE

The Internal Revenue Service alerted taxpayers to the latest versions of an e-mail scam intended to fool people into believing they are under investigation by the agency's Criminal Investigation Division.

The e-mail purporting to be from IRS Criminal Investigation falsely states that the person is under a criminal probe for submitting a false tax return to the California Franchise Tax Board. The e-mail seeks to entice people to click on a link or open an attachment to learn more information about the complaint against them. The IRS warned people that the e-mail link and attachment is a Trojan Horse that can take over the person's computer hard drive and allow someone to have remote access to the computer.

The IRS urged people not to click the link in the e-mail or open the attachment. Similar e-mail variations suggest a customer has filed a complaint against a company and the IRS can act as an arbitrator. The latest versions appear aimed at business taxpayers as well as individual taxpayers.

The IRS does not send out unsolicited e-mails or ask for detailed personal and financial information. Additionally, the IRS never asks people for the PIN numbers, passwords or similar secret access information for their credit card, bank or other financial accounts.

Recipients of questionable e-mails claiming to come from the IRS should not open any attachments or click on any links contained in the e-mails. Instead, they should forward the e-mails to phishing@irs.gov. Since the establishment of the mail box last year, the IRS has received more than 17,700 e-mails from taxpayers reporting more than 240 separate phishing incidents. To date, investigations have identified host sites in at least 27 different countries, as well as in the United States.

Other fraudulent e-mail scams try to entice taxpayers to click their way to a fake IRS Web site and ask for bank account numbers. Another widespread e-mail tells taxpayers the IRS is holding a refund (often \$63.80) for them and seeks financial account information. Still another email claims the IRS's 'anti-fraud commission' is investigating their tax returns.



Need help?

Call the Fraud Assistance Line

720-874-8547