

## Forgo fraud this tax season: IRS-CI issues tips to protect your wallet, identity

DENVER – Tax season kicked off Jan. 23, and IRS Criminal Investigation (IRS-CI) reminds U.S. taxpayers to take extra steps to protect their identities and wallets when filing their taxes.

“Education and outreach are key to preventing tax fraud,” said IRS-CI Chief Jim Lee. “If U.S. taxpayers know what to lookout for, they can avoid falling victim to the latest tax fraud scheme.”

Forgo fraud this filing season:

1. Choose a tax preparer wisely. Look for a preparer who is available year-round.
2. Ask your tax preparer for their IRS Preparer Tax Identification Number (PTIN). All paid preparers are required to have one.
3. Don't use a ghost preparer. They won't sign a tax return they prepare for you.
4. Don't fall victim to tax preparers' promises of large refunds. If it's too good to be true, it probably is. All taxpayers must pay their fair share of taxes.
5. Don't sign a blank tax return. Taxpayers are ultimately responsible for what appears on tax returns filed with the IRS.
6. Make sure you receive your refund. Your refund should be deposited into your bank account, not your tax preparer's.
7. The IRS will not call you threatening legal action. If you receive a call like this, hang up, it's a scam!
8. Don't respond to or click links in text messages, emails or social media posts claiming to be the IRS. They may contain malware that could compromise your personal information.
9. Protect your personal and financial information. Never provide this information in response to unsolicited text messages, emails or social media posts claiming to be the IRS.
10. Report fraud to law enforcement. [Submit Form 3949-A, Information Referral](#), if you suspect an individual or a business is committing fraud.

IRS-CI is the only federal law enforcement agency with the authority to investigate violations of the Internal Revenue Code. In fiscal year 2022, IRS-CI identified \$5.7 billion in tax fraud, initiated 1,388 criminal tax investigations and obtained 699 criminal sentences for tax crimes.

IRS-CI is the criminal investigative arm of the IRS, responsible for conducting financial crime investigations, including tax fraud, narcotics trafficking, money-laundering, public corruption, healthcare fraud, identity theft and more. IRS-CI special agents are the only federal law enforcement agents with investigative jurisdiction over violations of the Internal Revenue Code, boasting a more than 90 percent federal conviction rate. The agency has 20 field offices located across the U.S. and 12 attaché posts abroad.