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WASHINGTON — Aggressive and threatening phone calls by criminals impersonating IRS agents remain near the top of the annual "Dirty Dozen" list of tax scams for the 2015 filing season, the Internal Revenue Service announced today.

The IRS has seen a surge of these phone scams in recent months as scam artists threaten police arrest, deportation, license revocation and other things. The IRS reminds taxpayers to guard against all sorts of con games that arise during any filing season.

"If someone calls unexpectedly claiming to be from the IRS with aggressive threats if you don't pay immediately, it's a scam artist calling," said IRS Commissioner John Koskinen. "The first IRS contact with taxpayers is usually through the mail. Taxpayers have rights, and this is not how we do business."

The IRS will never:

- Call to demand immediate payment, nor will the agency call about taxes owed without first having mailed you a bill.
- Demand that you pay taxes without giving you the opportunity to question or appeal the amount they say you owe.
- Require you to use a specific payment method for your taxes, such as a prepaid debit card.
- Ask for credit or debit card numbers over the phone.
- Threaten to bring in local police or other law-enforcement groups to have you arrested for not paying.

If you get a phone call from someone claiming to be from the IRS and asking for money, here's what you should do:

- If you know you owe taxes or think you might owe, call the IRS at 1-800-829-1040. The IRS workers can help you with a payment issue.
- If you know you don't owe taxes or have no reason to believe that you do, report the incident to the TIGTA at 1-800-366-4484 or at www.tigta.gov.
- If you've been targeted by this scam, also contact the Federal Trade Commission and use their "FTC Complaint Assistant" at FTC.gov. Please add Telephone Scam to the comments of your complaint.

Remember, too, the IRS does not use email, text messages or any social media to discuss your personal tax issue involving bills or refunds. For more information on reporting tax scams, go to www.irs.gov and type "scam" in the search box.

Chief Dave Osborne

Morristown Police Department