

IRS Issues Warning about Tax Scam Targeting Preparers' Data

The IRS issued a warning about an emergent identity theft tax scam that targets tax preparers' computers and, in some cases, involves depositing funds in victims' bank accounts. The agency warned that cybercriminals are sending phishing emails to tax preparers that contain malware allowing them to make off with sensitive tax filer data. The fraudsters then use that information to file for fraudulent tax returns.

“In a new twist, the fraudulent returns in a few cases used the taxpayers' real bank accounts for the deposit,” the IRS said. “A woman posing as a debt collection agency official then contacted the taxpayers to say a refund was deposited in error and asked the taxpayers to forward the money to her.” The novel approach comes as fraudsters continue modifying their efforts to steal tax refunds.

The IRS advised taxpayers who receive a direct deposit refund that they did not request to ask their bank to return the direct deposit to the IRS and to call the IRS to explain why it is being returned. “Keep in mind interest may accrue on the erroneous refund,” the agency added. [Read more.](#)