



IRS CSIRC Bulletin - 11282005-001 Tax Refund Phishing E-Mails

What is the problem?

On November 28, 2005, the IRS CSIRC was made aware of a new Internet Phishing scam targeting taxpayers. The goal of the scam is to obtain personal and financial information via a fake IRS website. The attacker sends an email to individuals posing as an IRS representative informing them of a tax refund. In this attempt you are directed to a website that requests personal information including Social Security Numbers (SSN) and Credit Card information. This website may also attempt infect your system with malicious code. It is not the practice of the IRS to request this type of information via email.

Care should be taken when disclosing personal information. Identity thieves use stolen personal data to access financial accounts, run up charges on credit cards and to apply for loans. The IRS is aware of several identity theft scams targeting taxpayers. In one case, fraudsters sent bank customers fictitious correspondence and IRS forms in an attempt to trick them into disclosing their financial data. In another, abusive tax preparers used clients' Social Security numbers and other information to file false tax returns without the clients' knowledge. Sometimes scammers pose as the IRS itself. Last year, the IRS shut down a scheme in which perpetrators used e-mail to announce to taxpayers that they were "under audit" and could set matters right by divulging sensitive financial information on an official-looking Web site. Taxpayers should note the IRS does not use e-mail to contact them concerning issues related to their accounts.

If taxpayers have any doubt whether a contact from the IRS is authentic, they can call 1-800-829-1040 to confirm it.

Who is affected?

All taxpayers and IRS employees are potential targets.

What does this e-mail look like?

----- Original Message -----
From: <tax-refunds@irs.gov>
To:
Sent:
Subject: [IRS] Tax Refund

You are eligible to receive a tax refund for \$571.94.

To access the form for your tax return use the link below:
http://www.govbenefits.gov/govbenefits/externalLink.jhtml?url=h%74t%70:%2F%2F%77%77%77%2E%6F%72%67%2F2005%2F%3F_cmd=/cgibin/2005/trefund/id=96596,00
(copy and paste this link in your browser address bar)



12 days left to apply for your refund. You may not receive your refund as quickly as you expected. A refund can be delayed for a variety of reasons.

For example, a name and Social Security number listed on the tax return may not match the IRS records. You may have failed to electronically sign the return or applied after the deadline.

This email has been sent by the Internal Revenue Service, a bureau of the Department of the Treasury.

What should you do if you receive this message?

1. **If there are any attachments, do not open them.**
2. Immediately report receipt of such communication to the CSIRC by forwarding the original message as an attachment to an e-mail addressed to [*CSIRC \(csirc@csirc.irs.gov\)](mailto:csirc@csirc.irs.gov). A CSIRC analyst may contact you to gather additional information regarding the message if necessary.
(<http://www.csirc.web.irs.gov/spam/>)
3. Ensure that your system is running the latest Symantec Antivirus (SAV) client, to include Program Version (8.0.1.425) with the latest Virus Definition Files (as of 11/29/05 the current is 11/23/2005 rev. 19), and a managed client:
http://www.csirc.web.irs.gov/resources/sav_client.html
4. Ensure that your system is a Tivoli client:
http://www.csirc.web.irs.gov/resources/tivoli_endpoint.html