

## **Darien Woman Loses \$2,400 to Phone Scammer Who Said She Owed IRS**

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A man saying he was from the Internal Revenue Service called a 54-year-old Darien woman to demand thousands of dollars of what he said was her unpaid tax bill, and the scam worked — she lost \$2,400.

Darien police said the scam happened this way:

On July 5, the woman received a voicemail message from someone purporting to be "Peter Morris" from the IRS, asking her to call him back at (202) 657-4773. Police said that according to an Internet search, the name "Peter Morris" had been used in previous phone scams. The man had an accident from the Indian subcontinent, the woman later told police.

She called back the number and "Peter Morris" told her she owed \$2,359 in taxes, and she would either be arrested or subject to a federal lawsuit if she didn't pay it immediately. He stayed on the phone with her and told her not to hang up but to go to her bank, withdraw the money, then go to a Walmart store to send a Moneygram. She sent the money to Orlando, FL.

At that point, the man told her that money was for 2013 taxes and she still owed \$2,800 for 2014 taxes. She went back to her bank, and the man then told her she owed a total of \$6,550 in fines and back taxes, and to put it in a different account at her bank, Wells Fargo.

She tried to do that, but an employee at Wells Fargo told the woman that the other account was fraudulent and was known to be part of a scam involving phony IRS callers. She then spoke with police.

The total amount the woman lost, including fees for sending the money, is \$2,406.18.

Darien police recently posted advice about IRS phone scams:

Here's [a statement](#) police posted July 8 on the department's Facebook page:

Darien residents continue to receive phone calls, both automated and in person, that are active scams. The Internal Revenue Service has recently issued a consumer alert providing taxpayers with additional tips to protect themselves from telephone scam artists calling and pretending to be with the IRS.

These callers may demand money or may say you have a refund due and try to trick you into sharing private information. These con artists can sound convincing when they call. They may know a lot about you, and they usually alter the caller ID to make it look like the IRS is calling. They use fake names and bogus IRS identification badge numbers. If you don't answer, they often leave an "urgent" callback request.

"These telephone scams are being seen in every part of the country, and we urge people not to be deceived by these threatening phone calls," IRS Commissioner John Koskinen said. "We have formal processes in place for people with tax issues. The IRS respects taxpayer rights, and these angry, shake-down calls are not how we do business."

The IRS reminds people that they can know pretty easily when a supposed IRS caller is a fake. Here are five things the scammers often do but the IRS will not do. Any one of these five things is a tell-tale sign of a scam. The IRS will never:

1. Call you about taxes you owe without first mailing you an official notice.
2. Demand that you pay taxes without giving you the opportunity to question or appeal the amount they say you owe.
3. Require you to use a specific payment method for your taxes, such as a prepaid debit card.
4. Ask for credit or debit card numbers over the phone.
5. 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 Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA) at 1.800.366.4484 or at [www.tigta.gov](http://www.tigta.gov).
- You can file a complaint using the FTC Complaint Assistant; choose "Other" and then "Imposter Scams." If the complaint involves someone impersonating the IRS, include the words "IRS Telephone Scam" in the notes.

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Remember, too, the IRS does not use unsolicited email, text messages or any social media to discuss your personal tax issue. For more information on reporting tax scams, go to [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) and type “scam” in the search box.

Additional information about tax scams are available on IRS social media sites, including YouTube and Tumblr where people can search “scam” to find all the scam-related posts.