



# The Financially Responsible Steward

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*Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household? Blessed is that servant! - Luke 12:42-43*

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## MEDITATION SCRIPTURE

Treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but righteousness delivereth from death.  
- Proverbs 10:2

## SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

It's good to have money and the things that money can buy, but it's good too, to check up once in a while and make sure that you haven't lost the things that money can't buy. - George Lorimer

## TAX TIP

Don't forget the three D's of taxes: Documentation, Documentation, Documentation! If you haven't started already, designate a place to keep detailed records of your income, expenses, and other information you expect to report on your return this year and in the years to come. A good set of records and receipts can help save money when you do your taxes and nothing beats a paper trail when you want to have access to all possible deductions.

## IRS WARNS OF SCAMS THIS TAX SEASON

Tax season is underway - and the IRS is warning of a likely increase in scams targeting taxpayers. These cons can happen throughout the year, but tax season is an especially ripe time for fraudsters. Common frauds this tax season may include text-message scams, e-mail schemes, phone scams and unemployment fraud. Here is what to watch for in each scam:

1) Text message scams - Text hoaxes involve messages with bogus links that claims to be IRS websites or other online tools. Remember the IRS doesn't use texts (or social media platforms) to discuss personal tax issues, such as bills or refunds. Do not to click links or open attachments in unsolicited, suspicious or unexpected text messages – whether from the IRS, state tax agencies or others in the tax community.

2) E-mail scams - E-mail schemes are similar - they involve victims getting an unsolicited message appearing to be from the IRS or a program closely linked to the agency. However, the IRS doesn't use email to request personal or financial information. The tax bureau initiates most contacts via regular mail delivered by the U.S. Postal Service. The IRS will call or come to a home or business in some circumstances, such as when a taxpayer has an overdue tax bill or delinquent tax return. But the taxpayer will generally first receive several letters from the IRS in the mail.

3) Phone scams - Criminals generally leave pre-recorded, urgent messages requesting a call back, and threaten victims with an arrest warrant, deportation or revocation of licenses if they don't. Thieves can mask the true caller ID number to make it seem like an IRS office, local sheriff's office, state department of motor vehicles or other federal agency is calling. However, the IRS will generally first mail a bill to taxpayers, according to the agency. And all tax payments should never be made payable to third parties - - only to the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

The IRS will never ask for credit or debit card numbers over the phone, or demand immediate payment using a specific payment method like prepaid debit card, gift card or wire transfer. The agency also lets taxpayers question or appeal the owed amount.

4) Unemployment fraud - There's been an uptick in unemployment fraud during the pandemic. Organized crime rings and other thieves use stolen personal data to file fraudulent unemployment claims in victims' names. Victims may only discover the identity theft at tax time, when they receive a 1099-G tax form detailing unemployment compensation they never collected. Unemployment benefits are taxable income at the federal level, and in most states. Workers who get an inaccurate 1099-G should report it to the issuing state agency and request a corrected Form 1099-G.

If you get a phone call from someone claiming to be from the IRS, here's what you should do: If you know you owe taxes or you think you might owe taxes, call the IRS at 800-829-1040. The IRS employees at that line can help you with a payment issue - if there really is such an issue. If you know you don't owe taxes or have no reason to think that you owe any taxes, call and report the incident to the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration at 800-366-4484.

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