

IRS Criminal Investigation warns taxpayers about Child Tax Credit scams

The Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division is warning taxpayers about Child Tax Credit-related scams, which criminals may use to steal money and personal information.

While millions of American families started receiving the advance Child Tax Credit payments last week, criminals were already looking for innovative tactics to take advantage of unwitting victims. Taxpayers should be on the lookout for a variety of phone, e-mail, text message and social media scams targeting families eligible for the credit. Any communication offering assistance to sign up for the Child Tax Credit or to speed up the monthly payments is likely a scam. When receiving unsolicited calls or messages, taxpayers should not provide personal information, click on links, or open attachments as this may lead to money loss, tax-related fraud, and identity theft.

“For the first time, Americans are receiving advance payments of the child tax credit, giving rise to historic relief for millions of working families. Unfortunately, with these payments, there are those who, driven by greed, will try to exploit you for your child tax credit payment,” said IRS Criminal Investigation Acting Special Agent in Charge Corinne Kalve. “Taxpayers need to be aware of these threats and act with caution.”

“Advance payment of the child tax credit will give much needed support to millions of American families. Unfortunately, some individuals see these payments as an opportunity to enrich themselves at the cost of hardworking parents. Along with our partners at IRS, we will do everything in our power to prevent criminals from taking advantage of these families,” Said Scott Erik Asphaug, Acting U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon.

Although scammers constantly come up with new schemes to try and catch taxpayers off-guard, there are simple ways to identify if it is truly the IRS reaching out.

- The IRS does not initiate contact with taxpayers via e-mail, text messages, or social media channels to request personal or financial information, even information related to the Child Tax Credit.
- The IRS does not leave pre-recorded, urgent, or threatening messages. Aggressive calls warning taxpayers about a lawsuit or arrest are fake.
- The IRS will not call taxpayers asking them to provide or verify financial information so they can obtain the monthly Child Tax Credit payments.
- The IRS will not ask for payment via a gift card, wire transfer or cryptocurrency.

For taxpayers eligible for advance payments of the Child Tax Credit, the IRS will use information from their 2020 or 2019 tax return to automatically enroll them for advance payments. Taxpayers do not have to take any additional action. Taxpayers who are not required to file a tax return or who have not provided the IRS their information, may visit [IRS.gov/childtaxcredit2021](https://www.irs.gov/childtaxcredit2021) to provide basic information for the Child Tax Credit.

To report suspicious IRS-related phishing and online scams, visit [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov).