



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Scam Reminder: Fraudsters Impersonate Department of Revenue in Letters Targeting Pennsylvania Businesses

Harrisburg, PA — The Department of Revenue continues to warn Pennsylvanians of a new scam in which fraudsters are sending phony letters to Pennsylvania business owners to try to trick them into turning over their accounting records. The [fraudulent letters](#) include the Department of Revenue’s name and logo, leading the recipients of the letter to believe that they are under investigation for failing to pay Pennsylvania taxes.

“This is another example of the fact that fraudsters are working every day on scams just like this one so that they can steal from hardworking Pennsylvanians,” Revenue Secretary Dan Hassell said today as he appeared at a news conference in the Capitol Media Center. “We want to do everything that we can to help educate the public so that they know how to identify scams like this one and take the appropriate steps to protect themselves.”

Understanding the Scam

The goal of this scam is to make the recipient of the letter believe they are being investigated by the Department of Revenue for an “alleged violation of delinquent sales tax liability.” The letter threatens taxpayers by saying penalties will be imposed on their accounts. Further, the letter includes contact information for a “Resolution Officer” and urges the business owner to provide accounting records prepared by a licensed professional, such as an attorney or CPA.

Providing this information allows the scammers to comb through the accounting records for sensitive information such as bank account numbers and other financial data, which could be used to make unauthorized transactions, request fraudulent tax refunds, and even apply for loans under the name of the business.

Although these counterfeit notices bear the department’s name and logo, the notices include suspicious and inaccurate details, typical of these sorts of fraudulent scams, that can help differentiate between a counterfeit notice sent by a scam artist and a legitimate notice sent by the Department of Revenue. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

- The counterfeit notice does not include a return address. A notice from the Department of Revenue will always include an official Department of Revenue address as the return address.
- The counterfeit notice addresses the recipient as “Dear Business Owner.” When the Department of Revenue attempts to contact a business through a notice in the mail, the notice typically addresses the business owner or business name.

- The phony notice is very generic and does not include any specific information about the taxpayer's account. Legitimate notices from the Department of Revenue will include specifics, such as an account number and any liability owed, to give the taxpayer as much information as possible. Fraudsters do not include this specific information because they are trying to cast a wide net to lure in as many victims as possible.
- The counterfeit notice is sent by the "Pennsylvania Department of Revenue Tax Investigation & Enforcement Unit" and claims the business is "under investigation by the Pennsylvania State Revenue and Cash Disbursement Unit." While the department does conduct criminal tax investigations and tax enforcement, the units listed on the counterfeit notice are phony. Reach out to the department directly, as advised below, to determine if the "Unit" named exists.

Tips to Avoid This Scam

The Department of Revenue is encouraging Pennsylvanians to keep the following tips in mind to safeguard against this scam:

- **Ensure You Are Speaking With Legitimate Representatives of the Department:** This scam uses the Department of Revenue's name and logo to pose as a government entity. If you have any doubt at all about the legitimacy of a notice from the department, you should reach out to a department representative by using the [Online Customer Service Center](#). This allows the taxpayer to securely submit a question through a process that is very similar to sending an email.
- **Examine the Notice:** This counterfeit notice used vague language to cast a wide net to lure in as many victims as possible. Examine the notice for identifying information that can be verified. Look for blatant factual errors and other inconsistencies. If the notice is unexpected and demands immediate action, take a moment, and verify its legitimacy.
- **Conduct Research Online:** Use the information in a potentially counterfeit notice, such as a name, address or telephone number, to conduct a search online. The Department of Revenue's website, revenue.pa.gov, is the best source to verify information contained in a legitimate notice from the department.

Steps To Follow if You Have a Question

If you are concerned about a potentially fraudulent notice, please visit the department's [Verifying Contact by the Department of Revenue](#) webpage for a verified phone number and contact information. This will help you ensure that you are speaking with a legitimate representative of the department.

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