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## Post-submission Tax Scams

There is a scam going around that attempts to obtain taxpayers' personal details through the email. This is commonly known as phishing. Scam artists send official looking emails to unsuspecting taxpayers that link to an electronic form or a cleverly disguised website that requires the taxpayer to fill in personal details such as bank account numbers, Social Security and credit card numbers.

Since the tax submission deadline has just passed, many taxpayers, especially among those who filed their returns electronically, have fallen prey to these scams. The emails are supposedly about something to do with their recently filed federal tax returns, prompting the recipient to comply with its instructions. Once that happens, the scam artists use the personal data input to access the taxpayer's bank accounts or apply for loans under the victim's name.

Sometimes those behind these scams send taxpayers snail mail, a phone call or fax, but the most of the time they communicate via email. But IRS spokeswoman Dee Harris Stepter says that any form of electronic communication by the IRS should arouse the suspicion of the taxpayer because the IRS never sends emails to taxpayers under any circumstances. If the IRS finds something wrong with your tax returns and needs to contact you, they would do so via the US Mail service.

There are only two possible legitimate occasions that may bring about an electronic communication with regards to your tax returns and both of these are only in direct response to your action. The first is if you had filed your taxes electronically, your tax submission software company would likely send you an email to confirm that the IRS has received your electronic filing. The second occasion is when you visit the IRS website at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) and click on 'Where's my refund?' to check on the status of your refund, which would of course result in a response electronically.

Cynthia Albert, Director of Operations and Media Relations for the Better Business Bureau of New Orleans says that phishing scams attempting to obtain personal details of consumers have proliferated of late. She advises taxpayers who receive such bogus emails to report it to the IRS by emailing the details to [phishing@irs.gov](mailto:phishing@irs.gov). Never consider replying to such emails or opening any attachments. Delete them as soon as you can and make sure your personal details are secured. For instance, change your passwords to your electronic banking accounts often.

Darrin T. Mish is a veteran, nationally recognized tax attorney who has focused on providing IRS help to taxpayers for over a decade. He regularly travels the country training other attorneys, CPAs and enrolled agents on how to handle their toughest cases with the IRS. He is highly ranked among the top attorneys in the country, with an AV rating from Martindale-Hubbell and a perfect 10 on Avvo.com. Martindale-Hubbell has also honored him with a listing in their Bar Register of Preeminent Lawyers. He is a member of the American Society of IRS Problem Solvers and the Tax Freedom Institute. With clients on every continent but Antarctica, he has what it takes to solve your IRS problems no matter where you live in the world. If you would like more information about his practice and how he can help you, please call his office at (813) 229-7100 or toll free at 1-888-GET-MISH.