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IRS Criminal Investigation Division Warns of Child Tax Credit Scams

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The Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division on Wednesday warned taxpayers about Child Tax Credit-related scams, which the IRS says criminals may use to steal money and personal information.

According to the release, 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, the IRS said. 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.

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.

If you are eligible for advance payments of the Child Tax Credit, the IRS will use information from your 2020 or 2019 tax return to automatically enroll you for advance payments, according to the release. 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.

Residents of the Virgin Islands are expected to start receiving Child Tax Credit payments in August, roughly a month's delay compared to the U.S., which started issuing payments last week, [according to](#) Governor Albert Bryan.

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