



SCAM
ALERT

GHOST TAX PREPARER SCAM

Tax season is different this year due to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, as many businesses are online or out of people's homes, including tax preparers. This year, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is warning tax filers to watch out for ghost tax preparers.

Ghost tax preparers are scam predators who do not follow tax laws in order to gain access to your personal information, make promises for larger returns so they can charge higher rates and remain blameless in any future audits. Be vigilant when you are choosing a tax preparer.

The IRS, Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and Better Business Bureau (BBB) recommend watching out for red flags when choosing a tax preparer and **avoiding** those who:

- Do not have a valid Tax Preparer Identification Number
- Insist on cash payment only
- Refuse to sign as the preparer
- Will not provide receipts
- Invent income to falsely qualify you for tax credits
- Claim fake deductions to increase the size of your refund
- Send your refund to their bank account for any reason

Note: You may report scam predators to the FTC, BBB, Adult Protective Services (APS), Office of the Inspector General and the Federal Bureau of Investigation Internet Crime Complaint Center.

If you think you may be a victim of a scam, contact
San Bernardino County APS at 1 (877) 565-2020
or your local police department.