



Pilgrim Accounting Inc.

PROFICIENCY IN ACCOUNTING

# NEWSLETTER

## HOW TO AVOID BEING SCAMMED BY FAKE CRA REPRESENTATIVES?

I have yet to have a client who loves being contacted by the people who work with the Canada Revenue Agency.

That is understandable, because usually it has to do with something that interrupts our day.

No matter how efficiently we try to handle our business affairs, a contact from CRA generally means that some document is missing, a deadline is approaching or missed, and something requires our immediate attention.

But this year, I can't believe how many clients have contacted me in total panic from calls or e-mails they received from scam artists purporting to be from the CRA, when they clearly were not.

The scariest of all the calls is from someone who says they are from the CRA threatening to have you put in jail if you do not pay any debt owing immediately.

The RCMP in virtually every Canadian community have been inundated with calls from distraught citizens this year so upset with what is happening. They advise us, as does the CRA, that our national taxation agency simply does not do this.

In your mind, link the threats and bullying with the scam artists and hang up the phone. You may not enjoy a call from the CRA, but they are professionals and they handle their business of collecting what you owe professionally as well. They do not take a mobster approach.

Next to the "pay now or go to jail call," a popular and ongoing scam is for the scam artist to send you an email saying they have an e-transfer awaiting you from the Canada Revenue Agency, but they can't send it to you until they obtain your personal banking information.

Many a delighted responder has quickly sent all their personal data, only to regret it deeply as their account is drained. How can you protect yourself from this scam?

Be aware that the Canada Revenue Agency does not send refunds by e-transfers. It does direct deposit, not e-transfers, and only then if you have requested it.

There are some instances where an accounting agency you may have hired to handle your tax filing uses e-transfers in their refund program, but they will never, never send you an email asking for your personal banking information. They will have collected it from you at the time of the business you are conducting with them.

If you were not expecting to receive any money, do not consider this your lucky day. It is highly unlikely that you are getting any. Oftentimes the scam artist will give you a number to call to verify that they really are the CRA and it may even come up on your phone as the CRA.

These fraudsters are very clever. Do not fall for that trick.



If you want to call the CRA and find out if you are entitled to a refund or if there is an issue with your account, call: 1-800-959-8281. The CRA has definite protocols for handling the personal information of Canadians. These include:

**1. They do not leave personal information on anyone's answering machine or ask you to leave your personal information on their answering machine.**

**2. They do not ever ask for your passport number, your SIN number, or your driver's license.**

As with all shady deals in life, if something about your taxes sounds too good to be true, it likely is.

You can protect yourself additionally by contracting reputable companies to handle your taxation issues. This adds another level of protection protocols to the handling of your sensitive material.

It is unfortunate that fraudsters have decided to concentrate on this already stressful area of doing business and focus on taking advantage of people. But by thinking logically and carefully, and taking time to check, you can prevent further stress and anguish down the road.

Contact us for advice!

Pilgrim Accounting Inc.

Phones: (416) 514-1741, (416) 273-3663

E-mail: [info@pilgrim-accounting.com](mailto:info@pilgrim-accounting.com)

*Certified professional bookkeeper and certified tax specialist Elena Ivanova is managing director of Pilgrim Accounting Inc., a national accounting and tax preparation service based in Richmond Hill, Ont. You can reach her at [elena@pilgrim-accounting.com](mailto:elena@pilgrim-accounting.com).*