DLK ADVISORY

ATO IMPERSONATION SCAMS ON THE RISE

The ATO has recently warned taxpayers to be alert to malicious scammers who are using increasingly sophisticated methods and technology to impersonate the ATO. A new tactic on the rise involves “spoofing”, whereby scammers mimic a legitimate ATO phone number visible on caller ID to call or send SMS messages to taxpayers, or mimic a legitimate email domain to send emails.

The SMSs and emails sometimes ask the recipient to click on a link and provide their personal details in order to obtain an alleged “refund” from the ATO. Alternatively, the scammers may ask the taxpayer to pay a fake tax debt. The ATO warns Australians that these scammers intend to steal not only your money, but also sometimes your identity via your personal information.

The risk of falling victim to a “spoofing” scam is even greater considering that some scammers hold enough personal information about the targeted taxpayer to appear genuine. As the ATO legitimately contacts taxpayers by phone, SMS and email from time to time, it’s important to know how to spot the tell-tale signs of a scammer who is impersonating the ATO.

The ATO does not send emails or SMSs asking taxpayers to provide details such as login, personal or financial information, or to download a file, open an attachment or install software.

The ATO also advises that it does not behave aggressively or threaten taxpayers with arrest, jail or deportation, nor does it ask taxpayers to pay ATO debts via iTunes or Google Play cards, pre-paid Visa cards or cryptocurrency (eg Bitcoin).

If you are unsure whether a communication is legitimate, do not respond or click on any links or open any attachments. You can call the ATO's scam hotline on 1800 008 540 and they can tell you whether the communication was legitimate.

If you have made a payment to someone you later suspect is a scammer, you should report this to the ATO; contact your bank or financial institution; make a formal police report; and report the scam to SCAMwatch or the Australian Cybercrime Online Reporting Network.

If you have provided personal information such as your tax file number to a suspected scammer, you should also call the ATO scam hotline immediately.

Contact us today if you have any doubts about a recent communication you have received from the ATO or if you have any concerns that you may have fallen victim to an impersonation scam.

CONTACT

If you have any queries, please feel free to contact us.

Ben Melin
ben.melin@dlkadvisory.com.au

David Lilja
david.lilja@dlkadvisory.com.au

DLK Advisory
Level 10, 99 Queen Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
T: +61 3 9923 1222

Partnering together to achieve your objectives