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**Beshear: Tax Return Time**

**is Peak Season for Scammers**

Clark County resident lost \$9,900 in IRS Scam

FRANKFORT, KY. (Jan. 28, 2019) – As Kentuckians begin electronically filing their state and federal income taxes Jan. 28, Attorney General Andy Beshear is asking them to be prepared for an increase in scam calls.

Beshear said tax season scams typically involve scammers pretending to be an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) agent who claims they need to verify the victim's personal and financial information over the phone or claims that the victim owes back taxes.

Once the scammer has the victim's information, they can steal tax returns and other funds by changing the deposit to a reloadable money card.

"Tax season last year was the busiest time for staff in my office who handle scam reports, and this year I want to ensure Kentuckians are prepared for the barrage of scam calls that may not slow down until April," Beshear said. "It is not only IRS scams that increase during tax season, but con artists also try to take advantage of Kentuckians' interactions with other local, state and federal agencies."

Beshear said his office recently worked with a Clark County resident who sent \$9,900 to an IRS scammer in the form of Google Play cards. Threats of arrest coerced the victim to follow the demands of the caller. The victim is now working with Beshear's office, and has signed-up for Scam Alerts to avoid future victimization.

Beshear's office recommends following these tips to avoid falling victim to scammers:

Never share any personal or financial information over the phone.

Know that the IRS, and other local, state and federal agencies, will never call and request money over the phone, or ask you to send money via wire transfer, cash or gift cards.

If you receive a call from someone pretending to be with a local, state or federal agency, hang-up and independently verify the correct number and dial it.

If you believe you have been a victim of a tax return theft, Kentuckians can contact the IRS directly at 800-908-4490 and the Kentucky Department of Revenue at 502-564-4581.

The filing deadline for individual income tax returns is Monday, April 15, 2019.

Beshear continues to work with state and federal partners to find innovative ways to stop scam calls – one of the critical missions of the Office of the Attorney General.

To report a scam to the Office of Attorney General, call the Consumer Protection Hotline at 888-432-9257 or visit [ag.ky.gov](http://ag.ky.gov) to fill out a complaint online.

To sign up to receive Scam Alerts from Beshear's office text the words KYOAG Scam to GOV311 (468311) or enroll online at [ag.ky.gov/scams](http://ag.ky.gov/scams).

**Take Steps to Avoid Hypothermia This Winter**

With zero to sub-zero temperatures predicted later this week around the state, many Kentuckians could be exposed to harsh winter elements. To prepare for these conditions, Department for Public Health (DPH) officials are emphasizing the importance of limiting exposure to the cold and taking necessary steps to prevent hypothermia.

"When the thermometer drops, people are at increased risk for hypothermia," said DPH Commissioner Jeff Howard, M.D. "Hypothermia occurs when an individual's body temperature drops below what is necessary to achieve normal metabolism and other bodily functions. In severe cases or when the body is not properly warmed, death can result."

The condition occurs most often when an individual is submerged in icy waters. However, people exposed to cold weather who aren't sufficiently prepared also are at an increased risk for the condition.

To prevent hypothermia, DPH advises that Kentuckians:

- Wear appropriate clothing. Layer clothes made of synthetic and wool fabrics, which are best for keeping warm. Always remember to wear hats, coats, scarves and gloves.
- Avoid consuming alcohol if outdoors. Alcohol can actually speed the loss of heat from the body.
- Avoid overexertion from activities that cause excessive sweat. This can lead to damp clothing, which causes chills.
- Stay as dry as possible.

Warning signs of hypothermia in adults include shivering, exhaustion, confusion, fumbling hands, memory loss, slurred speech and drowsiness. In infants, bright red/cold skin and very low energy are present.

If you notice any of these signs, take the person's temperature. If it is below 95° F, the situation is an emergency – get medical attention immediately.

If medical care is not available, begin warming the person as follows:

- Get the victim into a warm room or shelter.
- If the victim is wearing any wet clothing, remove it.
- Warm the center of the body first – chest, neck, head and groin using an electric blanket if available. You can also use skin-to-skin contact under loose, dry layers of blankets, clothing, towels or sheets.
- Warm beverages can help increase body temperature, but do not give alcoholic beverages. Do not try to give beverages to an unconscious person.
- After body temperature has increased, keep the person dry and wrapped in a warm blanket, including the head and neck.
- Get medical attention as soon as possible.

Individuals working outside during this time of year should pay extra attention to these guidelines, particularly those susceptible to overexertion. Outdoor workers should make sure they are appropriately dressed and take frequent breaks to warm up and make sure their clothes are sufficient to keep them warm and dry.

"Be sure to check on your neighbors, especially if you have older adults living near you, to make sure they are okay during these frigid temperatures," concluded Dr. Howard. "And take steps to protect your pets, livestock and farm animals from the cold too."

To learn more, go to our website: [www.chfs.ky.gov](http://www.chfs.ky.gov) and type in "hypothermia" in the "What can we help you find?" search tool. More information on hypothermia can also be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/staysafe/hypothermia.html>.