



HANOVER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HCSO Issues a SCAM Alert

Hanover, VA – The Hanover County Sheriff's Office would like to make the public aware of a scam involving an attempt to collect money in order to relieve tax debt.

A Hanover resident received a letter claiming to be on behalf of the Bureau of Tax Enforcement for Hanover County. The letter references the garnishment of wages, bank accounts and property seizures as a method of collection if the debt is not paid.

Please know that this is a SCAM. Hanover County does not have an agency titled "Bureau of Tax Enforcement". Criminals who use this methodology will prey on unsuspecting citizens utilizing official appearing documents to legitimize their scam. If you ever have any question as to the legitimacy of such requests, please contact the Hanover County Sheriff's Office immediately.

Some ways you can reduce your risk of becoming a victim of these kinds of scams is to:

- Be aware of scams and "phishing" schemes. Do not give out personal information over the phone, through the mail, or over the Internet unless you have initiated the contact. The Sheriff's Office reminds citizens that the IRS will not call you and demand immediate payment. The IRS will not call about taxes you owe without first mailing you a bill.
- Protect your personal data. Use security software with firewall and anti-virus protection. Use strong passwords. Shred all documents that contain personal information.
- Do not click on links or download attachments from unknown or suspicious emails.
- Monitor your credit report. Federal law requires that each of the three credit bureaus (Equifax, Experian and Transunion) provide one free credit report per year to individuals upon request. You may order your free credit report from each of the three bureaus at

"CONTINUING TO BE A PART OF, NOT APART FROM, THE COMMUNITY"

the Annual Credit Report Website (www.annualcreditreport.com).

If you are a victim of tax-related identity theft:

- Contact the IRS immediately at 800-908-4490. The IRS will advise you to file a report with your local law enforcement agency.
- Contact the Hanover County Sheriff's Office non-emergency line at 804-365-6140 to file a report.
- File a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission at identitytheft.gov.

Contact one of the three major credit bureaus to place a "fraud alert" on your credit records:

- www.Equifax.com 1-888-766-0008
- www.Experian.com 1-888-397-3742
- www.TransUnion.com 1-800-680-7289
- Close any financial or credit accounts opened by identity thieves.
- Complete IRS Form 14039, Identity Theft Affidavit, if your e-file return rejects because of a duplicate filing under your SSN.

For more information, visit the following websites:

- Internal Revenue Service (IRS) (<https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/tax-scams-consumer-alerts>)
- Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (https://www.treasury.gov/tigta/contact_report_scam.shtml)
- Federal Trade Commission (<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/tax-related-identity-theft>)

Anyone with information about this scam is asked to contact the Hanover County Sheriff's Office at (804) 365-6140 or the Metro Richmond Crime Stoppers at (804) 780-1000. Citizens can also download the "P3 Tips" app for their mobile devices to submit their tip. Both Crime Stoppers methods are anonymous.

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