

ATO Info on Scams and Fraud

Is it any surprise that scams, identity crime and cyber security breaches cost the Australian community more than \$2.2 billion every year?

“One victim lost \$900,000 to scammers over the course of several months, even borrowing money from family and friends,” ATO Assistant Commissioner Kath Anderson said last month.

The ATO is working with the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and other similar agencies to actively fight cybercrime and the many variations to scams. Scammers are criminals and the ATO warns regularly about the most recent scams and what to look for. This includes using analytical models and implementation of safeguards to detect fraud.

“The large number of people lodging their tax returns means scammers are particularly active, so it’s important to keep an eye out for anything that looks suspicious and protect your private information,” says Kath Anderson.

Depending on the breach, the protection methods the ATO uses will vary. Forms lodged are accessed by trained security officers prior to any action being taken. While this may occasionally cause delays in processing, be aware that there is active protection in place.

The ATO advises that while phone scams are the most regular, a 95% of notifications received; do not pay anyone claiming to be from the ATO by iTunes or any other dubious manner. Always follow safe and procedural methods including obtaining payment codes from the BAS or Business Portal, pay by BPay and match the ATO reference number.

The ATO is actively shutting down the phone numbers that are being used, however the struggle is that there is a large number using VOIP phones that pretend to be local numbers and can be generated from anywhere in the world. These are harder to readily shut down.

It is important to take your awareness that bit further and review what protocols you have in place. Do they protect your client’s information? Or are there other measures that can be taken to keep information more secure?

While the scam emails, SMS and phone calls can be convincing there are things that you and your clients can look out for to recognise and report a scam.

Keep your awareness current and your security measures thorough!

Suspect a scam – call: 1800 008 540 or email: ReportEmailFraud@ato.gov.au

References

- [ATO – Verify a Scam](#)
- [ICB – Current Scams](#)
- [news.com.au – Don't fall for this tax time phone scam](#)