

## Dufferin OPP warn of tax scam

By Josh Bergant

It's tax season again, and with that comes a myriad amount of scam-artists, seeking to obtain your hard earned money rather nefariously. Dufferin OPP as of late has received several complaints of fraudsters running a tax scam, usually involving regular people, and even some business, with the specific intent of extorting a significant amount of various personal information.

The most common approach... as tab- ulated in a press release from the OPP on the matter?... [Is] fraudsters' impersonating the real Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). Whether by telephone or by email, the pitch involves [the fraudster phishing] for identification or asking that outstanding taxes be paid by pre-paid debit/credit cards.

Further, recipients of these messages are sometimes chided with warnings about police attending the situation, and arresting taxpayers that do not comply, this vital detail cannot be further from the truth.

Consumers and businesses also receive a notification about owing 'back taxes' as a result of an audit in prior weeks. The payment must be then made immediately; to avoid a purported fine, or the recipient is even told that there is an outstanding warrant that can be avoided if the payment is made promptly.

Surprisingly, in many cases, individuals are told they could be deported if the taxes are not paid right away. Some additional warning signs, apart from common sense, and basic understanding of the general tax process annually, suggest: not taking immediate action, verifying that what you are being told is in fact the truth (which in this case it is not), and querying yourself as to why the CRA would be asking for personal information (when in all likelihood they already have this information readily available already, without the hassled need for additional phone calls).

Contacting the CRA to confirm that you actually in fact owe back taxes, or are entitled to a refund, are also essential before providing anything involving your banking information. For additional information in regards to Fraud scams involving the CRA, readers are suggested to visit the Canada Revenue Agency Web Page at [www.cra-arc.gc.ca](http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca) and navigate to the section pertaining to security, which includes information about this type of fraudulent activity.

If you were a victim of such a crime, you can seek help at several locations, including the Canadian Anti-fraud centre, which can be called toll-free at 1-888-495-8501, RCMP Secure Sign-In at 1-613-993-2999, and the Competition Bureau of Canada at 1-800-348-5358. Remember, with fraud, the best thing you can do is report it!