

Department of Revenue warns of COVID-19 scams

The Oregon Department of Revenue is warning taxpayers of calls and email phishing attempts related to the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, pandemic and federal government relief payments. These scams can lead to tax-related fraud and identity theft.

Taxpayers should watch not only for emails but text messages, websites, and social media attempts that request money or personal information.

“Oregon taxpayers should take extra precaution to guard their personal information from these unscrupulous scam attempts,” said Oregon Department of Revenue Director Nia Ray. “Most people who qualify to receive a stimulus check do not need to sign up, apply, or verify any personal information, online or elsewhere.”

The Department of Revenue and the IRS remind taxpayers that scammers may:

- Emphasize the words “stimulus check” or “stimulus payment.” The official term is economic impact payment.
- Ask the taxpayer to sign over their economic impact payment check to them.
- Ask by phone, email, text, or social media for verification of personal and/or banking information saying that the information is needed to receive or speed up their economic impact payment.
- Suggest they can get a tax refund or economic impact payment faster by working on the taxpayer’s behalf. This scam could be conducted by social media or even in person.
- Mail the taxpayer a bogus check, perhaps in an odd amount, then tell the taxpayer to call a number or verify information online in order to cash it.

Taxpayers should look out for phishing emails asking

them to verify their personal information in order to receive an economic stimulus check from the government. While talk of economic stimulus checks has been in the news cycle, government agencies are not sending unsolicited emails seeking taxpayers’ private information in order to send them money. Phishing emails may also claim to be related to: Charitable contributions, general financial relief, airline carrier refunds, fake cures and vaccines, as well as fake testing kits.

The IRS doesn’t initiate contact with taxpayers by email, text messages, or social media channels to request personal or financial information. People should be alert to scammers posing as the IRS to steal personal information. The IRS initiates most contacts through regular mail delivered by the United States Postal Service.

Those who receive unsolicited emails, text messages, or social media attempts to gather information that appear to be from either the IRS or an organization closely linked to the IRS, such as the Electronic Federal Tax Payment System should forward it to phishing@irs.gov.

Taxpayers are encouraged not to engage potential scammers online or on the phone. Learn more about reporting suspected scams by going to the Report Phishing and Online Scams page on IRS.gov.

Official IRS information about the COVID-19 pandemic and economic impact payments can be found on the Coronavirus Tax Relief page on IRS.gov. The page is updated quickly when new information is available.

For more info on protection, or what to do if they’re a victim of identity theft, visit irs.gov, consumer.ftc.gov or www.oregon.gov/dor.

Studded tire deadline extended until May 15

SALEM — Oregon drivers will not be required to remove studded tires until 11:59 p.m. Friday, May 15.

The deadline had previously been extended from April 1 to May 1.

While studded tires are allowed in Oregon by law from Nov. 1 through March 31, the Oregon Department of Transportation decided to again extend that deadline in response to the continuing public health emergency of COVID-19.

ODOT encourages drivers

to have their studded tires removed before May 15 if it can reasonably be done while maintaining social distancing.

For additional information about the state’s efforts in response to COVID-19, visit the Oregon Health Authority website at govstatus.egov.com/OR-OHA-COVID-19. For additional information about steps ODOT is taking to slow the spread of the virus, please visit www.oregon.gov/odot/pages/incident.aspx.

Expect delays on Highway 126 for tree removal

A tree removal safety project will cause delays on Highway 126, the Florence-Eugene Highway, about one mile east of the tunnel for the next two weeks. An Oregon Department of Transportation maintenance crew will be removing trees from the state’s right of way to enhance safety for travelers at mileposts 20-22.

The work is scheduled weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. starting on Monday, April 20, and lasting the next two weeks.

At least one lane of travel will be open with flaggers controlling two-way traffic. Travelers should expect delays.

For more information about road conditions, check www.tripcheck.com.

HEALTH NOTIFICATION! Are You Hard of Hearing?



A major name brand hearing aid provider wishes to field test a remarkable new digital hearing instrument in the area. This offer is free of charge and you are under no obligation.

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At the end of this evaluation, you may keep your instrument, if you so desire, at a tremendous savings for participating in this field test. Special testing will be done to determine the increased benefits of this technology.

Benefits of hearing aids vary by type and degree of hearing loss, noise environment, accuracy of hearing test, and proper fit.

This is a wonderful opportunity to determine if hearing help is available for your hearing loss and get hearing help at a very affordable price.

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