



SCAM W-8BEN

The Form W-8BEN is a legitimate U.S. tax exemption document, however, it can only be submitted through a withholding agent. In the past, fraudsters have targeted non-residents of the U.S. using the form as a lure to get personal details such as passport numbers and PIN codes. The legitimate IRS Form W-8BEN does not ask for any of that information. The phony letter or fax also refers to a Form W9095, which does not exist. Furthermore, the IRS doesn't require a recertification of foreign status.

Scam variations

Be alert to bogus letters, emails and letters that appear to come from the IRS or your tax professional requesting information. Scam letters, forms and e-mails are designed to trick taxpayers into thinking these are official communications from the IRS or others in the tax industry, including tax software companies. These phishing schemes may seek personal information, including mother's maiden name, passport and account information in order to steal the victim's identity and their assets.

Note that the IRS does not:

- Demand that people use a specific payment method, such as a prepaid debit card, gift card or wire transfer. The IRS will not ask for debit or credit card numbers over the phone. For people who owe taxes, make payments to the United States Treasury or review [IRS.gov/payments](https://www.irs.gov/payments) for IRS online options.
- Demand immediate tax payment. Normal correspondence is a letter in the mail and taxpayers can appeal or question what they owe. All taxpayers are advised to know their rights as a taxpayer.
- Threaten to bring in local police, immigration officers or other law enforcement to arrest people for not paying. The IRS also cannot revoke a license or immigration status. Threats like these are common tactics scam artists use to trick victims into believing their schemes.

Taxpayers who receive the IRS phone scam or any IRS impersonation scam should report it to the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration at its [IRS Impersonation Scam Reporting](https://www.irs.gov/impersonation) site and to the IRS by emailing phishing@irs.gov with the subject line "IRS Impersonation Scam."