



San Leandro Police Department Crime Prevention News & Tips



OWE BACK TAXES?

***TAX RELIEF COMPANIES CAN RESULT IN
MORE PAIN THAN GAIN***



We've helped thousands of people settle their tax debts for a fraction of the amount owed.

We can stop wage garnishments, bank levies, tax levies, property seizures, and unbearable monthly payments.

We can significantly reduce your tax debt. Call for a free consultation.

FACT OR FICTION?

Tax relief companies use the radio, television and the Internet to advertise help for taxpayers in distress. If you pay them an upfront fee, which can be thousands of dollars, these companies claim they can reduce or even eliminate your tax debts and stop back-tax collection by applying for legitimate IRS hardship programs. The truth is that most taxpayers don't qualify for the programs these fraudsters hawk, their companies don't settle the tax debt, and in many cases don't even send the necessary paperwork to the IRS requesting participation in the programs that were mentioned.

Adding insult to injury, some of these companies don't provide refunds, and leave people even further in debt. Some taxpayers who filed complaints with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) reported that, after signing up with some of these companies and paying thousands of dollars in upfront fees, the companies took even more of their money by making unauthorized charges to their credit cards or withdrawals from their bank accounts.



If you owe back taxes and don't know how you're going to pay the debt, the FTS, the nation's consumer protection agency, says don't panic, take a deep breath, and consider your options. If you are having trouble paying bills, it's often better to try to work out a payment plan with the creditor yourself than to pay someone else to negotiate a plan for you. The same is true when you owe money to the IRS or your state comptroller.

SPRING, 2012

CRIME PREVENTION UNIT

Sergeant L. Torres

577-3247

Officer T. DeGrano

577-3248

Officer K. Kovach

577-3252

(Continued on page 4)

COMMUNITY RESOURCE

National Girls Institute

The Department of Justice has announced a new resource—the National Girls Institute website — to better meet the needs of at-risk and delinquent girls, their families/ caregivers, and the agencies and organizations that serve them.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) established the National Girls Institute to develop and provide a range of training, technical assistance and other resources to local and private organizations serving girls and young women in, or at risk of entering, the juvenile justice system. Through this website, professionals can submit requests for training and technical assistance, as well as find current information about best practices, gender-response tools, research and related events.

The website contains a section for parents, foster parents, or guardians of girls who are, or have been, involved in the justice

system. It provides information about juvenile justice system procedures, rules and legal language in addition to providing advice, resources and chat lines.

Additionally, the National Girls Institute contains a section for girls who are seeking help, but may not know where to start. Girls can get advice on topics such as communication, drugs, dating, etc. The website provides the opportunity to hear success stories: how other girls made it and what helped them. Girls also want a place to share with other girls. It includes quotes from girls from cities, small towns, and all different walks of life about what helped them get through rough times and back on track. Their answers include activities, resources, and self-exploration.

For more information on the National Girls Institute, please visit the website at www.nationalgirls institute.org.

SCAM ALERT



SCAMMERS USING TEXT MESSAGING

Scammers first began by calling your landline, then moved to sending e-mail messages, and now they are sending text messages to your phone. The scams remain the same. The message may look official and seem like it's coming from your bank or credit card company, asking you to verify account numbers or passwords. In reality, these are scammers trying to catch you. Once you reply, it's too late.

If you get a telephone call, e-mail, or text message indicating your credit card has been deactivated, be careful. Most likely, it's a scam and there is nothing wrong with your card. It is just an attempt to get your credit card number. Scammers do this by asking you to verify your credit card number so it can be "reactivated." **DO NOT FALL FOR IT.** Call the toll-free number on the back of your credit card to confirm the card is active.

Information in this article provided by the State of California Department of Consumer Affairs. For more scam alerts visit the website at www.dca.ca.gov/.

COMMAND STAFF

- Sandra R. Spagnoli
Chief of Police
- Stephen Pricco
Police Captain—Operations
- Edward Tracey
Police Captain—Services
- Jeff Tudor, Lieutenant
Criminal Investigation Division
- James Lemmon, Lieutenant
Traffic Division
- Greg Lemmon, Lieutenant
Patrol Division
- Rick DeCosta, Lieutenant
Patrol Division
- Randall Brandt, Lieutenant
Patrol Division
- Denise Lenz
Support Services Manager

CHILD DRIVEWAY SAFETY



As the weather becomes warmer, children will be spending more time playing outdoors. Most child safety organizations will tell you that driveway accidents are one of the leading causes of serious injury to young children.

Even the most safety conscious parent can use a little refresher on how to maximize child driveway safety and prevent your child from being hurt in one of the most common child dangers. Unfortunately, more deaths than injuries occur in child driveway accidents, and these are always caused by a car backing over an unseen child.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN?

The first and obvious answer is to never leave small children unattended in your front yard. If you have a fenced in backyard, this is the ideal location for your children to play if you are not with them at all times. Children find the driveway to be an ideal place to ride their bicycles. Children need to be taught at a young age that the front yard is not a play zone when grown-ups are not around. Parents can also take steps to block a driveway if children are in the front yard. Child driveway safety nets are available which extend across the bottom portion of your driveway and will prevent your children from running into the street, or from vehicles coming in. Even using a trash bin can slow down vehicles that are coming in and out of the driveway. Place the bin at the entrance to the driveway or behind any vehicles parked in the driveway. This will ensure that cars moving in or out will have to wait for the bin to be moved.

Also, vehicles parked on the street will sometimes back into the nearest driveway to make a turn in the other direction. Again, this puts your child at risk, and a child

driveway safety net can be an excellent way to protect your child.

Adults who are leaving the home and backing out of the driveway need to instill in themselves a routine they keep before they even enter their vehicle. Walk around the vehicle before putting the key in the ignition. Do not allow toys to be on the driveway and ensure that children know to never play around or behind a parked vehicle.

BASIC SAFETY TIPS

- ☑ Never leave children unattended when in the front yard.
- ☑ Do not let your children play in the front yard after dark.
- ☑ Use child safety driveway barriers when your child is playing outside, and ensure that there is an adult present during this time.
- ☑ Teach your children the basic rule of never playing around or near a parked or moving vehicle.
- ☑ If you are home and need to move your car and there is not other adult to attend to your children, secure them in the vehicle with you as you move the car.
- ☑ Always walk around your parked vehicle before you put the key in the ignition.
- ☑ Create safe zones in your yard where your children can move to quickly when a vehicle is entering or exiting your driveway.

When it comes to child driveway safety, nothing will replace the value of parental or adult supervision.

SAN LEANDRO POLICE DEPARTMENT CRIME PREVENTION NEWS & TIPS

is published by the Crime Prevention Unit.

San Leandro Police Department

901 East 14th Street, San Leandro CA 94577

Tax Relief (continued from page 1)**IRS HELP FOR TAXPAYERS**

If you can't pay your taxes or your payments are late, the IRS charges you penalties and interest. It also has several tax relief programs to help people who owe back taxes:

- An **Installment Agreement** is generally available to people who can't pay their tax debt in full at one time. The program allows people to make smaller monthly payments until the entire debt is satisfied.
- An **Offer in Compromise (OIC)** lets taxpayers permanently settle their tax debt for less than the amount they owe. The OIC is an important tool to help taxpayers in limited circumstances; taxpayers are eligible only after other payment options have been exhausted and their ability to pay has been reviewed by the IRS.

According to the IRS, you can apply for an Installment Agreement, OIC, or a penalty or interest abatement without the help of a third party. If you prefer third-party assistance in negotiating with the IRS, only certain tax professionals — Enrolled Agents (federally-authorized tax practitioners who can represent taxpayers before all administrative levels of the IRS), Certified Public Accountants (CPAs) and attorneys — have the authority to represent you. Their services should involve a face-to-face meeting where they explain your options and their fee structure.

You can contact the Taxpayer Advocate Service, an independent organization within the IRS that provides free help to people who are experiencing financial difficulties or who need help resolving a problem with the IRS. Call 1-877-777-4778 or visit www.irs.gov/advocate/. (See adjoining article.)

TAXPAYER TIPS

If you owe back taxes and you are having trouble meeting your tax obligation:

- Read your notices from the IRS or your state comptroller. Ask about collection alternatives.
- Save yourself some aggravation by ignoring promises from companies that say you are “qualified” or “eligible” for a tax relief program to resolve your tax debt. Only the IRS or your state comptroller can make that determination.
- Walk away if a company requires a fee in advance for tax relief services. Check them out with the IRS.

Information in this article provided by the FTC. For more information visit their website at www.ftc.gov/moneymatters or the IRS at www.irs.gov.

Taxpayer Advocate Service

The Taxpayer Advocate Service (TAS) is an independent organization within the IRS. It assists taxpayers who are experiencing economic harm, such as not being able to provide necessities like housing, transportation, or food; taxpayers who are seeking help in resolving problems with the IRS; and those who believe an IRS system or procedure is not working as it should.

TAS is your voice at the IRS. You may be eligible for their help if you have tried to resolve your tax problem through normal IRS channels and have gotten nowhere. TAS assists taxpayers whose problems are causing financial difficulty or significant cost, including the cost of professional representation. This includes businesses as well as individuals.

Call the Taxpayer Advocate Service Case Intake Line to see if you are eligible: 1-877-777-4778 or more information about the TAS is available at www.irs.gov/advocate/.

Numbers to know:

Non-emergency	577-2740
General Business	577-2740
Administration Division	577-3253
Records Section	577-3217
Traffic Division	577-3208
Animal Control	577-3206
Community Compliance/ Abandoned Vehicles	577-3260
Recruiting	577-3247
Neighborhood Watch	577-3248
Crime Free Multi-Housing	577-3252