

# ATO Fake Tax Debt Scam



The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) has released an alert regarding a scam targeting taxpayers

The scam involves the use of letters, emails or telephone calls with the intention of impersonating the ATO. The scammer's goal is to convince the target that they have a tax debt and must pay it immediately to avoid prosecution. In some cases, targets have been asked to make payments by unusual methods including Bitcoin and store gift cards. The calls have recently become more sophisticated, with scammers impersonating the target's Tax Agent to appear legitimate, and replicating legitimate ATO phone numbers.

Furthermore, these emails may contain harmful links or attachments containing malware that can corrupt the computer system, or 'ransomware' which can unlock access to computer files.

***The ATO has publicly reaffirmed that it would never:***



***Demand immediate payments***



***Threaten you with arrest***



***Request payment by unusual means such as Bitcoin, store gift cards or iTunes cards.***

So when you next receive an email from an unknown recipient, take care when opening links or attachments, and if you become aware of a scam attempt contact the ATO.

A recent article written by journalist, Emma Koehn in The Age, dated 12 October 2018 identifies a number of examples on potential scam attacks to watch out for. [Click here to read article.](#)