

THE IRS TATTLER

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DON'T GET ROOKED BY AN OUT OF TOWN TAX RELIEF OUTFIT

I have Oklahomans that call me out of breath, scared to death, telling me that they have just been contacted by some very official sounding quasi-governmental body (the Federal Relief Commission, the Internal Revenue Society, e.g.) alerting them that a federal tax lien has just been filed against them. These firms scour the public record for liens, and there maybe one filed against you, but it may or may not be breaking news, i.e. a current lien. Beware, these are out of town sales scammers calling to prey on your emotional vulnerability when you have a tax problem. These shameless folk will call you at work, call you at home, email you and send you mail in envelopes that look like IRS refund checks. Don't be fooled! The IRS will NEVER call or email you directly to alert you about a federal tax lien. The only notice you will ever get from the government (or not get, if you don't accept certified mail) is an official Notice of Federal Tax Lien on IRS Form 668.

If you are contacted by one of these salesmen, because that's what they are, here are a few questions to flush them out (and maybe even have a little fun doing so):

Does your outfit employ local, licensed Oklahoma lawyers that work with the IRS every day? If they answer yes, they are either lying or in violation of the Oklahoma Rules of Professional Conduct for attorneys. Oklahoma attorneys are prohibited from unilaterally soliciting you directly by phone, and even in writing except in a very specific way involving conspicuous clear disclaimers on the correspondence they send you (see, for example, the disclaimer on this newsletter). Oklahoma attorneys are further prohibited from having others contact you directly for them, so as to get around the previous prohibition.

Where are Federal Tax Liens discharged or withdrawn in the State of Oklahoma? IRS Federal Tax Liens in Oklahoma are handled in one place: the IRS Lien Advisory Group in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Does your outfit provide a comprehensive, one-time, flat fee in writing to every client? Pop-up debt relief outfits are famous (or rather infamous) for getting you in the door with a low fee, then charging you more and more until you have reached the point of no return. Remember, these guys don't answer to anybody, and their

goal is to get rich as quick as possible, take bankruptcy if necessary and pop up under some other official sounding name, leaving you holding the bag. Just look at the Taxmasters and J.K. Harris models that failed because they over-promised and under-delivered a bill of goods to unwary consumers. Don't let them call and scare the hell out of you this Halloween season!

We are local licensed attorneys that work with the IRS every day. We charge a one time flat rate. Call Oklahoma tax lawyer, Travis Watkins, at 800-721-7054 today!

**NOVEMBER
2012 Tax Due
Dates**

**November 13-
Employees who
work for tips.** If you received \$20 or more in tips during October, report them to your employer. You can use Form 4070.

The IRS allows you to claim a reasonable cause for not filing your taxes, but you need to back up your excuse with hard evidence.

The average cynical taxpayer in the state of Oklahoma may be surprised to learn that the IRS isn't entirely unsympathetic about missing tax returns. In fact, there are a wide variety of "reasonable causes" that a taxpayer can invoke to explain his failure to file a return in any given year, ranging from illness and addition to foreclosure and bankruptcy. If the IRS agrees to take your circumstances into account, you'll

still have to pay your back tax bill in full, but you may be spared the full brunt of accumulated penalties and interest. The trick, of course, is to back up your "reasonable cause" with a reasonable amount of cold, hard facts and evidence. An IRS revenue officer will be unimpressed by a flat-out declaration like "that was the year I had cancer" if you're not prepared to offer him medical documents describing your

prognosis and treatment. Likewise, having your house foreclosed on may be a good reason not to pay your taxes, but you have to show the IRS the actual documents in order to make your case. (You can see why this is necessary; otherwise, every individual who failed to file his taxes out of sheer laziness would claim he had a made-up "reasonable cause.") How can you know whether or not you had reasonable

cause for not filing your taxes? A good first step would be to consult an experienced tax lawyer, who can tell you whether your excuse meets the standards of what is bound to be a very skeptical IRS revenue officer. Call the Oklahoma tax professionals at Travis W. Watkins, PC today 405-607-1192 for a free consultation today!

Here are some helpful Hints from the IRS when choosing a Return Preparer



Jennifer, Knox, Emma Watkins with their newest member of the family, Sophie

IRS Criminal Investigation (CI) reminds you;

- Taxpayers are responsible for the accuracy of all entries made on their tax returns, which include related schedules, forms and supporting documentation. This remains true whether the return is prepared by the taxpayer or by a return preparer.

- Be careful in selecting the tax professional who will prepare your return. Some basic tips and guidelines to assist taxpayers in choosing a reputable tax professional are:

- Avoid return preparers who claim they can obtain larger refunds than other preparers.
- Avoid preparers who base their fee on a percentage of the amount of the refund.
- Use a reputable tax professional that signs and enters a preparer tax identification number (PTIN) on your tax return

and provides you with a copy for your records.

- Consider whether the individual or firm will be around to answer questions about the preparation of your tax return, months, even years, after the return has been filed.

- Never sign a blank tax form.

- Ask questions. Do you know anyone who has used the tax professional? Were they satisfied with the service they received?

- Tax Evasion is a crime, a felony, punishable up to 5 years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine.

When in doubt, check it out!

Taxpayers hearing claims from preparers offering larger refunds than other preparers are encouraged to check it out with a trusted tax professional or the IRS before getting involved .

This information is from the official IRS website.



Casinos Keep Close Track of Oklahoma Gambling Winnings

Are you familiar with the saying, "Whatever happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas"? Well, it may sound good in movies, TV shows, and travel commercials, but the fact is at least one thing that happens in Vegas is guaranteed NOT to stay in Vegas. If you win more than a certain amount of money in a Las Vegas casino, management is obliged to file a form with the government for tax purposes—complete with your Social Security number. Come April 15, if you don't declare your gambling winnings, your paperwork won't match that of the IRS, and you'll be in deep trouble. Here are the applicable cutoffs for winnings in Vegas (and elsewhere):

\$1,200 from a slot machine

\$1,500 from a Keno game

\$5,000 from a poker game

Any payoff of at least \$600, provided that amounts to at least 300 times your initial bet. (This might apply, for instance, to a lucky streak at blackjack.)

What happens if you win your money at a non-government-sanctioned location, such as an illegal nightclub or an



NCAA basketball pool at your office? In this case, there's more of a gray area. If you are an Oklahoma resident who has won thousands of dollars in Vegas

or some other gambling location, contact the Oklahoma tax pros at Travis. W. Watkins, PC (800-721-7054) for a free consultation. We'll advise you on the best way to declare this income on your taxes to help avoid potential problems with the IRS. If you

win big at a Vegas casino, management is obliged to inform the IRS for tax purposes.

Sleep Loss Corner-Tips to reduce stress and sleep better

Stress is our response to daily life. It affects us emotionally, physically, and behaviorally. The right amount of stress can be a positive force that helps us to do our best and to keep alert and energetic. Too much stress, however, can make us tense, anxious, and can cause sleep problems.

What Are the Signs of Stress? Common signs of stress include depression, sleep problems, tension, anxiety, work mistakes, poor concentration, and apathy, among many others. If high levels of unwanted stress are not properly managed, your health and sense of well-being can suffer. Therefore, it is important to learn how to manage stress.

Tips for Managing Stress for Better Sleep

These tips can help you ease stress and hopefully get a better night's sleep:

Assess what is stressful: The

first step in getting a handle on stress is to figure out what is causing it. Take a good look at your physical condition and your daily activities. Do you suffer from pain? Are you overloaded at work? Once you identify your stressors, you can take steps to reduce them.

Seek social support: Spending time with family and friends is an important buffer against stress. It can be helpful to share your problems with people who care for you.

Practice thought management: What we think, how we think, what we expect, and what we tell ourselves often determine how we feel and how well we manage rising stress levels. You can learn to change thought patterns that produce stress. Thoughts to watch out for include those concerning how things should be and those that over generalize sets of circumstances

(for example, "I'm a failure at my whole job because I missed one deadline.") Many commercial audiotapes and books can help you learn thought management exercises.

Exercise: Exercise can help you blow off steam thereby reducing stress. In addition, flexible, loose muscles are less likely to become tight and painful in response to stress. If you have a medical condition or are over the age of 50, it's best to check with your doctor before beginning an exercise regimen. **Eat a healthy diet:** Junk food and refined sugars low in nutritional value and high in calories can leave us feeling out of energy and sluggish. A healthy diet, low in sugar, caffeine, and alcohol consumption, can promote health and reduce stress.

Get adequate sleep: A good night's sleep allows you to tackle the day's stress easier. When you are tired, you are less

patient and easily agitated which can increase stress. Most adults need 7-8 hours of sleep per night. Practicing good sleep hygiene along with stress-lowering tactics can help improve your quality of sleep.

Delegate responsibility: Often, having too many responsibilities can lead to stress. Free up time and decrease stress by delegating responsibilities.

These steps can help many people sleep soundly through the night. However, if you have frequent sleep problems, talk to your doctor. Your doctor can assess you for possible sleep disorders and recommend safe and effective sleep medicine

If your lack of sleep stems from an IRS problem, give us a call.

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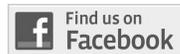
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Special giveaway! \$250 off any tax service



<p>Question:</p> <p><i>The first Thanksgiving was celebrated in the fall of what year?</i></p>	<p>A. 1621</p> <p>B. 1721</p> <p>C. 1821</p> <p>D. 1521</p>
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