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IRS Unable to Adequately Help Tax Fraud Victims

The IRS has admitted that it is overwhelmed by the number of tax fraud cases it has to resolve. An IRS spokesman in Florida said its employees are receiving additional training to better equip them to handle tax fraud. At the same time, the IRS is working to catch fraudulent tax returns at source. But this is easier said than done.

Last week, dozens of taxpayers who claim they were victims of tax fraud waited for more than three hours before the IRS opened its doors in Tampa to complain about being cheated of their dues. Many were sent home and told to return the next day. The IRS in Tampa just did not have sufficient manpower to deal with the surge of cases of tax fraud.

Tampa is considered one of nine high-risk cities in the country when it comes to tax fraud. Many victims have had their identities stolen and found that someone had filed tax returns in their names, while others have had their tax refunds siphoned to another location. All it takes for the IRS computers to process a refund is a matching Social Security number and name. The IRS computers do not review inconsistencies. With the situation getting graver, the IRS has been coming under fire from many disgruntled taxpayers. One Tampa victim, Rose Thomas who discovered someone had filed a tax return using her name said, "(The IRS needs) to be more considerate about what we're going through and not have an attitude when we walk in the door."

It has been discovered that hospitals are one of the primary places identity fraud takes place. Often, hospitals are careless in how they handle patients' personal particulars. It is easy for such particulars in hospitals to get into the wrong hands and be used for fraudulent purposes.

The IRS has been stepping up efforts to combat identity theft and other forms of tax fraud. The agency has installed new and stronger filters to detect fraudulent filings. An identity theft protection unit and special fraud hotline have also been set up at the IRS to give assistance to taxpayers. In September, a task force of local law enforcement busted a huge ring. At the same time, the IRS has given the public its assurance that it is expediting cases of fraud.