

# One in Five (20%) Canadians Have Been Exposed to a Tax Season-Related Scam

*Majority (54%) Do Not Know the Proper Outlets To Report Incidents of  
Fraud*

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## One in Five (20%) Canadians Have Been Exposed to a Tax Season-Related Scam

*Majority (54%) Do Not Know the Proper Outlets To Report Incidents of Fraud*

**Toronto, ON** – With tax season underway, many scams attempting to cheat Canadians out of their money are likely to surface with a good portion of Canadians already having been exposed to such scams at some point in their life, according to a new survey conducted on behalf of Ipsos Reid on behalf of the Certified General Accountants Association of Canada (CGA). According to the results of the data, one in five (20%) Canadians admit to having been exposed, whether it is themselves, a close friend/family member, or someone they know, to a tax season-related scam. The following table fully outlines the scams that took place in and around tax season time that Canadians have been exposed to:

<u>Tax Season-Related Scam</u>	%
Phishing emails/telephone calls	11%
Identity theft	5%
Abuse of charitable organizations and deductions	4%
Tax prepare fraud	3%
Other	2%
I haven't been exposed to any tax season-related scams	80%

Even more alarming than the proportion of Canadians who've been exposed to tax season-related scams is the proportion that doesn't seem to know what to do about it if they were victims of such scams. A majority (54%) of Canadians say they don't know the proper outlets to report incidents of fraud should they become victims of tax season-related scams. Only a minority (46%) know of such outlets to report incidence of tax season-related fraud.

### *Scam Victim Breakdown*

Overall, one in ten (14%) Canadians cite themselves, a close friend, a family member, or someone else they know as being victims of a tax season-related scam. One in ten (9%) Canadians know someone other than a close friend or family member that has been a victim of such a scam, while 5% of Canadians have either been a victim themselves or one of their close friends or family members has been a victim of a tax season-related scam.

Among those Canadians who know victims or been victims themselves, a good portion have lost a significant amount due to tax season-related scams. One in five (18%) have either lost or know of someone who's lost more than \$1,200, while one in ten victims of tax season-related scams have lost between \$25-\$100 (9%), between \$251-\$750 (10%), or between \$750-\$1,200 (8%).

Luckily, there have also been victims that have not lost money due to these tax season scams. Two in five (36%) cite that they didn't lose any money from the scam they fell victim to. Conversely, there are other Canadians who have fallen victim to these scams and are completely unaware as to how much money they've lost as a result. More than one in ten (14%) victims of tax season-related scams don't know how much money they've lost from these scams.

## *Sources for Tax Season Guidance*

During tax season there are many sources that Canadians might use to help guide them and help them when it comes to getting their taxes done. Two in five (41%) Canadians seek guidance from a professional accountant. Interestingly, more Canadians seek tax season guidance from family members and friends (29%) and online sources (18%) than from a financial advisor (17%), while one in ten (8%) seek guidance from some other source. One in five (18%) Canadians, however, cite not seeking guidance from any of these sources.

## *Other Interesting Findings*

- Men are twice as likely as women to have been a victim of tax season-related scams themselves (6% vs. 3% women) or have known a close friend (6% vs. 3% women) or someone else (11% vs. 6% women) to be a victim of such a scam. Also, fewer women (17%) cite having been exposed to tax season-related scams in comparison to men (23%).
- Interestingly, younger Canadians, aged 18-34, are significantly more likely to have been a victim themselves (8%) compared to middle-aged (4%, aged 35-54) and senior (2%, aged 55+) Canadians. They are also at least twice as likely to know a close friend (9%), family member (9%), or someone else (15%) who has been a victim compared to their middle-aged (4%/4%/7%) or senior (2%/3%/5%) counterparts. Canadian seniors (14%) are also the least likely to have been exposed to these scams, ahead of their middle-aged (20%) and younger (29%) counterparts.
- When it comes to knowing the proper outlets to report incidents of fraud, men (51%) are more likely than women (41%) to know where to go. Also, the older Canadians get, the more likely they are to know the proper outlets to report fraud. Canadian seniors (55%) are most likely to know of these outlets, ahead of middle-aged (42%) and younger (38%) Canadians.
- Men (20%) are more likely than women (16%) to use none of the tax season sources provided. Interestingly, the older Canadians get the less it appears they use these sources as well. Younger Canadians are most likely to use family members and friends (54%) or online sources (25%) when it comes to guide them during tax season.

- Quebecers (13%) are least likely to say they've been exposed to a tax season-related scam, slightly ahead of Atlantic Canadians (16%), Prairies residents (19%), Albertans (21%), British Columbians (23%), and Ontarians (24%).
- While Quebecers have least been exposed, they are also the least likely to know the proper outlets when it comes to reporting fraud. Two in three (66%) Quebecers don't know the proper outlets to report fraud should they become a victim of a tax season-related scam, drastically ahead of Ontarians (54%), Prairies residents (50%), Atlantic Canadians (49%), British Columbians (47%), and Albertans (42%)
- Quebecers (90%) are the most likely to cite using the listed tax season resources for guidance, ahead of Prairies residents (83%), Ontarians (81%), Atlantic Canadians (81%), British Columbians (80%), and Albertans (76%).



*These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between February 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>, on behalf of the Certified General Accountants Association of Canada (CGA). For this survey, a sample of 2,009 Canadians from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within +/- 2.5 percentage points had all Canadians adults been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.*

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