

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## IRS Criminal Investigation Atlanta Field Office provides tips to avoid romance scams

**ATLANTA** – With many Americans minds on Valentine’s Day, special agents at IRS Criminal Investigation Atlanta Field Office want to remind them to be vigilant against becoming a victim of romance scams.

“Valentine’s Day provides a timely reminder for the public to not fall prey to criminals using love to scam their way into their victims’ hearts for monetary gain” said Demetrius Hardeman, Acting Special Agent in Charge, Atlanta Field Office. “To avoid becoming a victim, people need to be aware of the telltale signs that they are being manipulated.”

### Tips to avoid romance scams

- Never send money to anyone you have only communicated with online or by phone.
- Be careful what you post and make public online. Scammers can use details shared on social media and dating sites to better understand and target you.
- Research the person’s photo and profile using online searches to see if the image, name, or details have been used elsewhere.
- Go slowly and ask lots of questions.
- Beware if the individual seems too perfect or quickly asks you to leave a dating service or social media site to communicate directly.
- Beware if the individual attempts to isolate you from friends and family or requests inappropriate photos or financial information that could later be used to extort you.
- Beware if the individual promises to meet in person but then always comes up with an excuse why he or she can’t. If you haven’t met the person after a few months, for whatever reason, you have good reason to be suspicious.

“Many of these scammers do not act alone and in many cases are part of a criminal enterprise dealing in other illicit activities such as human trafficking, gambling and loansharking,” Hardeman said.

Victims of a romance scam can contact local law enforcement or the IRS CI Atlanta Field Office at [atlantafieldoffice@ci.irs.gov](mailto:atlantafieldoffice@ci.irs.gov).

#IRS-CI#

CI is the law enforcement arm of the IRS, responsible for conducting financial crime investigations, including tax fraud, narcotics trafficking, money-laundering, public corruption, healthcare fraud, identity theft and more. CI special agents are the only federal law enforcement agents with investigative jurisdiction over violations of the Internal Revenue Code, obtaining a nearly 90% federal conviction rate. The agency has 20 field offices located across the U.S. and 12 attaché posts abroad. Atlanta Field Office covers the states of Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi. You can reach the Atlanta Field Office at [atlantafieldoffice@ci.irs.gov](mailto:atlantafieldoffice@ci.irs.gov).