

California Mobile Home News

Information of Interest About Mobile Home Park Living

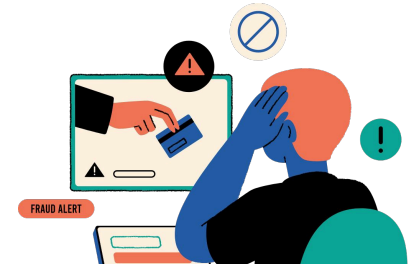
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www.californiamobilehome.news

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OUTSMARTING TAX SEASON SCAMS

Tax season already brings its share of stress—and unfortunately, it also attracts scammers. Fraud can happen year-round, but the months leading up to the April filing deadline are especially risky. Understanding how common tax scams work is one of the best ways to protect yourself and your finances. Some common scams to watch for:



Tax Identity Theft

Tax identity theft occurs when someone uses your Social Security number to file a fraudulent tax return and claim your refund. Often, victims only discover the issue when their legitimate return is rejected because one has already been filed. Another variation involves criminals using your Social Security number for employment, leading the IRS to believe you earned income you never received, potentially triggering unexpected tax bills or benefit reductions.

How to protect yourself:

File your tax return as early as possible and carefully review all IRS correspondence. Consider enrolling in the IRS Identity Protection PIN pro-gram, which adds an extra layer of security to your return.

IRS Imposter Scams

In these schemes, scammers pose as the IRS via phone calls, emails, texts, or even social media. They may claim you have an unclaimed refund, owe back taxes, or face immediate legal consequences. These messages often create urgency and ask for sensitive personal or financial information.

How to protect yourself:

Remember that the IRS does not initiate contact through email, text, or social media. Legitimate IRS communications arrive by mail on official letterhead. Be cautious of spelling errors, unusual links, or pressure to act immediately.

Ghost Tax Preparers

A ghost preparer accepts payment to prepare your taxes but disappears before filing your return, or never signs it. This can leave you liable for errors or unfiled returns.

How to protect yourself:

Verify that your preparer has proper credentials, including an IRS Preparer Tax Identification Number (PTIN). Avoid preparers who demand full payment upfront, promise unusually large refunds, or ask you to sign a blank return. Always review your return carefully before it's filed.

Tax scammers may be getting more sophisticated, but using best practices can keep you safe from becoming a victim. ■ *Source: US Bank*

Utility Reductions Available to Qualified Low Income Mobile Home Owners

The California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) Program provides income-qualified households with significant savings on their utility bills. Eligible customers can receive a 30 – 35% reduction on their electric bill and a 20% discount on their natural gas bill. Under the Public Utilities Code, electric utilities serving 100,000 or more customer accounts in California are required to discount. You can find phone numbers and websites for energy assistance programs that you

may be eligible for on the California Public Utilities Commission website. ■

Source: www.cpuc.ca.gov



Introduction

California Mobile Home News provides a forum for sharing information of interest to people who live and work in mobile home park communities in California and anyone else who is interested in knowing more about mobile home living. The California Mobile Home News is sponsored by the Manufactured Housing Educational Trust, a non-profit association that has worked to promote and preserve the mobile home park lifestyle since its incorporation in 1982. Please feel free to copy and distribute this newsletter as it is printed with all attributions and information as originally printed. You are invited to visit our site: www.californiamobilehome.news and participate in the exchange of information on mobile home parks!

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Fun Facts About St. Patrick's Day That May Surprise You

"St. Patrick's Day is an enchanted time — a day to begin transforming winter's dreams into summer's magic."

— Adrienne Cook

St. Patrick's Day is a popular holiday in the US as well as Ireland, celebrated by millions across both countries. Although its observation is widespread, you may not know of all the different traditions used for this celebration.

Looking for Shamrock

Shamrocks, also known as clovers, are typically found with three leaves, but the rarer four-leaf clover can be found as well. Their rarity, a 1-in-10,000 possibility, led to them becoming symbols of good luck. Try scanning over clover fields quickly! Your brain will notice differences before you consciously do. Instead of counting tiny leaves, try looking for a "square" amongst "triangles."

Bake Irish Soda Bread

Traditional Irish soda bread called for just four humble ingredients: flour, baking soda, buttermilk, and salt. These ingredients were historically Irish staples

that were accessible and cheap to all. In order to make the loaf lucky, Irish folks cut a cross across the top of the buns to "let the devil out." This practice was believed to ward off evil and protect the home.

Wearing Green

Most already associate the color green and St. Paddy's Day together but less know the history behind it. Historically, Irish people first starting donning green garments to symbolize their Catholicism and their rejection of British Protestantism and colonialism. Today, the Irish flag sports green—the Catholics, orange—the protestants, and white—the newfound peace between the two.

Hopefully this Saint Patrick's Day, you are able to partake in both new and old traditions as you celebrate the patron saint of Ireland. ■

Source: Reader's Digest



Mobile Home Residency Law Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Does a resident need a permit from HCD to remodel their home, even though all the changes and upgrades are on the inside?

A: Homeowners need a permit from the state Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). Only HCD, not local government, may issue permits for alterations of a mobile home's structural, fire safety, electrical, plumbing or mechanical components. The two offices that handle such permits are:

Northern California Area Field
Operations 9342 Tech Center Dr, #55
Sacramento, CA 95826
(916) 255-2501

Southern California Area Field
Operations 3737 Main St, #400
Riverside, CA 92501
(951) 782-4420

Recap:

- Permits are required. No exceptions. ■

Source: California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD)

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2. Receive No Cost Services
3. Enjoy the Energy Savings

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Holidays To Observe In March:

Mar. 8 - Daylight Savings Begins

Mar. 17 - St. Patrick's Day

Mar. 20 - Spring Begins

Resources & Information

Section 8 Rent Assistance

Section 8, also known as Housing Choice Voucher program, is a program that provides rental assistance to qualified renters. You can apply for Section 8 vouchers at any Public Housing Authority office in any county or city of residence.



MHET members support rent subsidies for qualified low-income mobile home owners in non-rent controlled jurisdictions. For more information call **(949) 380-3311**.

Mobilehome Assistance Center

California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD)
Call TOLL FREE: (800) 952-8356 or visit www.hcd.ca.gov

Southern California Mobilehome Hotline

Call TOLL FREE: (855) 438-6438
For questions specifically related to Southern California mobile home parks located in Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties, you may call the Southern California Mobilehome Hotline.

