Who’s knocking at my door?

Contrary to popular belief, the IRS can and does make unannounced visits to taxpayers’ homes and/or businesses. Known as “field visits”, this is usually your first contact with a Revenue Officer or “RO”.

The visit is intended to catch you off-guard. Some people, if they know the IRS is coming, will hide their assets and prepare for the visit. The whole time the RO is there, they are taking in as much information as possible, observing how many people are around (customers & employees), what assets they can see and even trying to get glimpses of information around your office, like letters from banks, an accounts receivable list, pending orders, etc.

When someone is caught off guard like this, they will generally want to appear cooperative and willing to do whatever they can to resolve the issue. That’s why they RO will want to sit down and complete an interview with you. They know this is the best time to get information. Later, once you’ve had a chance to “catch your breath” and think things through, you likely be more guarded and less forthcoming with information. That’s not to say you’re doing anything wrong, just that you aren’t sure what to expect or how the information will be used.

There are ways to mitigate the “damage” to yourself. The first thing is to be polite. Then, tell the RO that you would prefer them to talk to your representative. This is akin to the suspect on TV asking for an attorney. All questions should stop. The RO, at that point, will ask who your representative is and for their contact information. They may even ask you to call them right then. The RO will leave you a list of things to do with deadlines to do so.

That’s where you need to have our phone number handy. Either when they ask you to call, or immediately after they leave, call us. We will explain what the issues are and the options for resolving them. Then, we’ll contact the RO and do everything for you. The RO will then work through us, while we protect your rights and make sure you are treated fairly.