

Tips for Taxpayers about Identity Theft and Tax Returns

Identity theft remains a top priority for the Internal Revenue Service in 2014. Identity theft is one of the fastest growing crimes nationwide, and refund fraud caused by identity theft is one of the biggest challenges facing the IRS. This year, the IRS continues to take new steps and strong actions to protect taxpayers and help victims of identity theft and refund fraud.

Stopping refund fraud related to identity theft is a top priority for the tax resolving identity theft employees working on employees who work with taxpayers to recognize and provide assistance when identity theft occurs.



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Taxpayers can encounter identity theft involving their tax returns in several ways. One instance is where identity thieves try filing fraudulent refund claims using another person's identifying information, which has been stolen. Innocent taxpayers are victimized because their refunds are delayed.

Here are some tips to protect you from becoming a victim, and steps to take if you think someone may have filed a tax return using your name:

Tips to protect you from becoming a victim of identity theft

- Don't carry your Social Security card or any documents that include your Social Security number (SSN) or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN).
- Don't give a business your SSN or ITIN just because they ask. Give it only when required.
- Protect your financial information.
- Check your credit report every 12 months.
- Secure personal information in your home.
- Protect your personal computers by using firewalls and anti-spam/virus software, updating security patches and changing passwords for Internet accounts.
- Don't give personal information over the phone, through the mail or on the Internet unless you have initiated the contact or you are sure you know who you are dealing with.

If your tax records are not currently affected by identity theft, but you believe you may be at risk due to a lost or stolen purse or wallet, questionable credit card activity or credit report, contact the IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit at 800-908-4490, extension 245 (Monday - Friday, 7 a.m. - 7 p.m. local time; Alaska and Hawaii follow Pacific time).