



# TAXES. SECURITY. TOGETHER.

The IRS, the states and the tax industry are committed to protecting you from identity theft. We've strengthened our partnership to fight a common enemy – the criminals – and to devote ourselves to a common goal – serving you. Working together, we've made many changes to combat identity theft, and we are making progress. However, cybercriminals are constantly evolving, and so must we. The IRS is working hand-in-hand with your state revenue officials, your tax software provider and your tax preparer. But, we need your help. We need you to join with us. By taking a few simple steps, you can better protect your personal and financial data online and at home.

Please consider these steps to protect yourselves from identity thieves:

## Keep Your Computer Secure

- Use security software and make sure it updates automatically; essential tools include:
  - Firewall
  - Virus/malware protection
  - File encryption for sensitive data
- Treat your personal information like cash, don't leave it lying around
- Check out companies to find out who you're really dealing with
- Give personal information only over encrypted websites – look for “https” addresses.
- Use strong passwords and protect them
- Back up your files

## Avoid Phishing and Malware

- Avoid phishing emails, texts or calls that appear to be from the IRS and companies you know and trust, go directly to their websites instead
- Don't open attachments in emails unless you know who sent it and what it is
- Download and install software only from websites you know and trust
- Use a pop-up blocker
- Talk to your family about safe computing

## Protect Personal Information

Don't routinely carry your social security card or documents with your SSN. Do not overshare personal information on social media. Information about past addresses, a new car, a new home and your children help identity thieves pose as you. Keep old tax returns and tax records under lock and key or encrypted if electronic. Shred tax documents before trashing.

**Avoid IRS Impersonators.** The IRS will not call you with threats of jail or lawsuits. The IRS will not send you an unsolicited email suggesting you have a refund or that you need to update your account. The IRS will not request any sensitive information online. These are all scams, and they are persistent. Don't fall for them. Forward IRS-related scam emails to [phishing@irs.gov](mailto:phishing@irs.gov). Report IRS-impersonation telephone calls at [www.tigta.gov](http://www.tigta.gov).

Additional steps:

- Check your credit report annually; check your bank and credit card statements often;
- Review your Social Security Administration records annually: Sign up for My Social Security at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov).
- If you are an identity theft victim whose tax account is affected, review [www.irs.gov/identitytheft](http://www.irs.gov/identitytheft) for details.