



# 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 the nation's 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. 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 professional. But, we need your help. We need you to join with us. By taking a few simple steps to protect all of your digital devices, you can better protect your personal and financial data online and at home.

Please consider these steps to protect yourself from identity thieves:

### Keep Your Computer and Mobile Phone 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
- Use strong, unique passwords; consider a password manager
- Use 2-Factor Authentication
- Give personal information only over encrypted websites - look for "https" addresses
- Back up your files

### Avoid Phishing Scams and Malware

Identity thieves use phishing emails to trick users into giving up passwords and other information. Don't take the bait. Look for:

- Emails that pose as trusted source, i.e. bank, tax provider;
- Emails with an urgent message, i.e. update your account now!, with instructions to open a link or attachment
- Never download software or apps from pop-up advertising
- Talk to family about online security, both with computers and mobile devices

### Protect Personal Information

Don't routinely carry your or any dependents' Social Security card or documents with an SSN. Do not overshare personal information on social media. Information about past addresses, a new car, a new home and even 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 and your tax account is affected, review [www.irs.gov/identitytheft](http://www.irs.gov/identitytheft) for details.