Taxpayer Guide to Identity Theft

We know identity theft is a frustrating process for victims. We take this issue very seriously and continue to expand on our robust screening process in order to stop fraudulent returns.

What is identity theft?

Identity theft occurs when someone uses your personal information such as your name, Social Security number (SSN) or other identifying information, without your permission, to commit fraud or other crimes.

How do you know if your tax records have been affected?

Usually, an identity thief uses a legitimate taxpayer's identity to fraudulently file a tax return and claim a refund. Generally, the identity thief will use a stolen SSN to file a forged tax return and attempt to get a fraudulent refund early in the filing season.

You may be unaware that this has happened until you file your return later in the filing season and discover that two returns have been filed using the same SSN.

Be alert to possible identity theft if you receive an IRS notice or letter that states that:

- More than one tax return for you was filed,
- You have a balance due, refund offset or have had collection actions taken against you for a year you did not file a tax return, or
- IRS records indicate you received wages from an employer unknown to you.

What to do if your tax records were affected by identity theft?

If you receive a notice from IRS, **respond immediately**. If you believe someone may have used your SSN fraudulently, please notify IRS immediately by responding to the name and number printed on the notice or letter. You will need to fill out the IRS Identity Theft Affidavit, Form 14039.

For victims of identity theft who have previously been in contact with the IRS and **have not achieved a resolution**, please contact the IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit, toll-free, at 1-800-908-4490.

How can you protect your tax records?

If your tax records are not currently affected by identity theft, but you believe you may be at risk due to a lost/stolen purse or wallet, questionable credit card activity or credit report, etc., contact the IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit at 1-800-908-4490.

How can you minimize the chance of becoming a victim?

- Don't carry your Social Security card or any document(s) with your SSN on it.
- Don't give a business your SSN 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, anti-spam/virus software, update security patches, and change 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.

ID Theft Tool Kit

Are you a victim of identity theft?

If you receive a notice from the IRS, please call the number on that notice. If not, contact the IRS at 800-908-4490

Fill out the IRS Identity Theft Affidavit, Form 14039. (Please write legibly and follow the directions on the back of the form that relate to your specific circumstances.)

Credit Bureaus

Equifax
www.equifax.com
1-800-525-6285

Experian
www.experian.com
1-888-397-3742

TransUnion
www.transunion.com
1-800-680-7289

Other Resources

Visit the Federal Trade Commission's Identity Theft page or use the FTC's Complaint Assistant.

Visit the Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) to learn more about their internet crime prevention tips.

Report Suspicious Emails

Report suspicious online or emailed phishing scams to:
phishing@irs.gov.

For phishing scams by phone, fax or mail, call:
1-800-366-4484.

For More Information

- IRS.gov/identitytheft
- IRS.gov/phishing

The IRS does not initiate contact with taxpayers by email to request personal or financial information. This includes any type of electronic communication, such as text messages and social media channels.