



# Identity Theft Information for Taxpayers

Identity theft places a burden on its victims and presents a challenge to many businesses, organizations and governments, including the IRS. The IRS combats this crime with an aggressive strategy of prevention, detection and victim assistance.

## What is tax-related identity theft?

Tax-related identity theft occurs when someone uses your stolen Social Security number to file a tax return claiming a fraudulent refund. If you become a victim, we are committed to resolving your case as quickly as possible.



## Know the warning signs

In tax-related identity theft, the criminal generally 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:

- More than one tax return was filed for you,
- You owe additional tax, have a 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.

## Steps for victims of identity theft

1. File a report with the local police.
2. File a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission at [www.identitytheft.gov](http://www.identitytheft.gov) or the FTC Identity Theft Hotline at 1-877-438-4338 or TTY 1-866-653-4261.
3. Contact one of the three major credit bureaus to place a 'fraud alert' on your credit records:
  - [www.Equifax.com](http://www.Equifax.com) 1-800-525-6285
  - [www.Experian.com](http://www.Experian.com) 1-888-397-3742
  - [www.TransUnion.com](http://www.TransUnion.com) 1-800-680-7289

If your SSN is compromised and you know or suspect you are a victim of tax-related identity theft, take these additional steps:

4. Respond immediately to any IRS notice; call the number provided

5. Complete IRS [Form 14039, Identity Theft Affidavit](#). Use a fillable form at [IRS.gov](http://IRS.gov), print, then mail or fax according to instructions.

6. Continue to pay your taxes and file your tax return, even if you must do so by paper.

If you previously contacted the IRS and did not have a resolution, contact the Identity Protection Specialized Unit at 1-800-908-4490. We have teams available to assist.

More information: [www.irs.gov/identitytheft](http://www.irs.gov/identitytheft) or FTC's [www.identitytheft.gov](http://www.identitytheft.gov).

## About data breaches and your taxes

Not all data breaches or computer hacks result in tax-related identity theft. It's important to know what type of personal information was stolen.

If you've been a victim of a data breach, keep in touch with the company to learn what it is doing to protect you and follow the "Steps for victims of identity theft."

## How you can reduce your risk

- Don't routinely carry your Social Security card or any document with your SSN on it.
- Don't give a business your SSN just because they ask – only when absolutely necessary.
- Protect your personal financial information at home and on your computer .
- Check your credit report annually.
- Check your Social Security Administration earnings statement annually.
- 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 the Internet unless you have either initiated the contact or are sure you know who is asking.

**NOTE:** 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.