



TAX IDENTITY THEFT TIPS – March 2018

Tax Identity Theft

Tax identity theft occurs when a perpetrator uses someone else's Social Security Number (SSN) to file a felony tax return to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to receive a tax refund. This type of crime is also known as stolen refund fraud.

Other varieties of tax identity theft include falsely claiming dependents, using a deceased person's taxpayer information, or earning wages under another person's SSN.

Tax identity theft is a type of synthetic identity theft, meaning a perpetrator only needs a SSN and can fabricate other needed values. This is easier for criminals to commit than 'regular' identity theft, which requires gathering more real information.

Here are some tips and tools for helping you stay safe this tax season:

General Safety Tips:

- Protect your sensitive personal information – keep passwords hidden, and memorize your SSN instead of carrying your card
- Monitor your information regularly (SSN, bank statements, credit scores)
- Shred documents you don't need instead of throwing them away – don't make your personal information easy to find

Tax-specific Safety Tips:

- File your taxes early – if your taxes are already filed, potential criminals can't take advantage of your SSN
- If mailing a physical copy of your taxes, go to the post office rather than placing in mailbox
- If filing taxes online, use a secure internet connection
- The IRS will never call to threaten you for your information – don't fall for an IRS imposter

Tools and Resources

- IdentityTheft.gov is the federal government's one stop online resource for tax ID theft victims o Report identity theft
- Personalized recovery forms available
- Browse recovery steps and options
- The National Association of Tax Professionals lists legitimate companies and individuals trusted to prepare your taxes



- [Protecting Small Business](#) is the FTC's resource for small business owners with information about how to improve their cybersecurity and recognize common scams, with more information coming this year
- If taxpayers or businesses are concerned about the Equifax breach, the Federal Trade Commission offers information and guidance at www.FTC.gov/Equifax.

Source: [Stop.Think.Connect](#)