



West Virginia Executive Branch Privacy Tip

*Once again we are sharing tips from the IRS to help you stay safe when filing your income taxes.
Click here for more tips: <https://www.irs.gov/uac/IRS-Tax-Tips>*

Security Awareness for Taxpayers: The Tax Community Needs Your Help

IRS Taxes. Security. Together. Tax Tip Number 12, January 9, 2017

The IRS, the states and the tax industry are committed to protecting you from identity theft. But, we need your help to join us in this effort.

By taking a few simple steps, you can better protect your personal and financial data online and at home.

In recent weeks, we've issued a series of [IRS Security Awareness Tax Tips](#) designed to help you take steps to protect yourself. If you missed them, we've created an IRS Security Awareness Tax Tips page for you to catch up or review.

Remember, cybercriminals continue stealing large amounts of personal data from outside the tax system. They can use that data to file fraudulent tax returns or commit other crimes while impersonating the victims.

The IRS, the states and the tax industry joined together in the Security Summit initiative to help fight back against these criminals. We've made significant progress to help taxpayers, but we can do an even better job with your help.

Please consider these steps to protect yourselves and your data:

Keep Your Computer Secure

- Use security software and make sure it updates automatically; essential tools include using a firewall, virus/malware protection and 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, tax companies and other well-known business; instead, go directly to their websites
- 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 practices

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.

Watch out for 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 persistent and change frequently. Don't fall for them.

Forward IRS-related scam emails to phishing@irs.gov. Report IRS-impersonation telephone calls at www.tigta.gov.

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Note: Your agency/bureau/department/division may have specific requirements – always check your policies and procedures. If you have questions, contact your Privacy Officer.