

Sample article for organizations to use to reach customers (word count 439)

Post the following article on your websites and/or use in other communication vehicles to inform your customers about Identity theft. This article offers helpful tips to protect taxpayers from identity theft.

Protecting you and your tax refund is a top priority for the IRS

When personal information is lost or stolen it can lead to identity theft and refund fraud. And while you may encounter identity theft involving your tax return in several ways, one of the most common ways is when identity thieves try filing tax returns with fraudulent refund claims using your identifying information.

The IRS is often the first to inform victims that identity theft has occurred. Why? If someone else has filed a tax return with your identifying information before you file your legitimate tax return, the IRS will send you a notice informing you what has occurred and what steps to take. You may be a victim of identity theft if you receive a notice from the IRS stating that:

- You filed more than one tax return or someone has already filed using your information;
- You owe taxes for a year when you were not legally required to file and did not file; or
- You were paid wages from an employer where you did not work.

If you receive such a notice, the IRS advises you to respond quickly by using the contact information provided in the notice so that they can begin to correct and secure your tax accounts.

Here are some tips to protect you from becoming a victim:

- **Guard your personal information.** Identity thieves can get your personal information in many ways, including stealing your wallet, your mail, or even by looking through your trash.
- **Watch out for IRS impersonators.** 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 with whom you are dealing. The IRS does not initiate contact with taxpayers by email or social media channels.
- **Protect information on your computer.** While preparing your tax return, protect it with a strong password. Once you e-file the return, take it off your hard drive and store it on a CD or flash drive in a safe place.

If you think you may be at risk for identity theft due to a lost or stolen purse or wallet, questionable credit card activity, an unexpected bad credit report or any other way, fill out the IRS Identity Theft Affidavit, [Form 14039](#) so we can take steps to secure your tax account. Please write legibly and follow the directions on the back of the form that relate to your specific circumstances. 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.

The [Federal Trade Commission](#) also has helpful information about reporting identity theft.

If you have information about the identity thief who used or tried to use your information, file a complaint with the [Internet Crime Complaint Center](#).

For more information on our efforts to combat identity theft, visit IRS.gov and type identity theft in the search field.

NOTE TO EDITOR: Below are additional resources you can share with your customers.

Multimedia and social networking resources:

FACT SHEETS

[IRS Combats Identity Theft and Refund Fraud on Many Fronts](#)

FS-2014-1, January 2014 — Stopping identity theft and refund fraud is a top priority for the IRS. The agency's work on identity theft and refund fraud continues to grow, touching nearly every part of the organization. For the 2014 filing season, the IRS has expanded these efforts to better protect taxpayers and help victims.

[Tips for Taxpayers, Victims about Identity Theft and Tax Returns](#)

FS-2014-2, January 2014 — Identity theft is one of the fastest growing crimes nationwide, and refund fraud caused by identity theft is one of the biggest challenges facing the IRS. In 2014, the IRS continues to take new steps and strong actions to protect taxpayers and help victims of identity theft and refund fraud.

[IRS Criminal Investigation Combats Identity Theft Refund Fraud](#)

FS-2014-3, January 2014 — The IRS has seen a significant increase in refund fraud that involves identity thieves who file false claims for refunds by stealing and using someone's Social Security number. The investigative work done by Criminal Investigation is a major component of the IRS's efforts to combat tax-related identity theft.

YouTube housed videos related to identity theft

- IRS Efforts on Identity Theft – [English](#)
- IRS Identity Theft FAQ: Going After The Bad Guys - [English](#)
- IRS Identity Theft FAQ: First Steps for Victims – [English](#)
- Tax Scams: [English](#); [Spanish](#); [ASL](#)
- Dirty Dozen – Check out this video for the IRS list of top tax scams to avoid. [English](#); [Spanish](#); [ASL](#)
- Are You a Victim of Identity Theft?: [English](#)
- Protect Yourself From Identity Theft: [English](#)
- Phishing-Malware: [English](#)
- IRS Efforts on Identity Theft: [English](#)

Sample Tweets

Don't let anyone #stealyouridentity. Protect your personal information. <http://youtu.be/nOt7U23n5lc>

Protect yourself from #phishing scams. Your best defense is a good offense #identitytheft
<http://go.usa.gov/yMD>

For info on tax-related #identitytheft, visit the IRS.gov Identity Protection page:
<http://go.usa.gov/Bs2T>

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[IRS Identity Theft Efforts 2014](#)

[IRS Takes Action: ID Theft investigation](#)

[IRS warns of phone scam targeting taxpayers](#) – don't be a victim