

## Sample article for organizations to use to reach customers (332 word count)

*Customize and post the following article on your websites and/or use in other communication vehicles to inform your customers about what they need to do if their tax information is compromised.*

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### Protect Yourself from Identity Theft

Identity theft happens when someone uses your personal information, such as your name, Social Security number or other identifying information without your permission to commit fraud or other crimes. When it comes to federal taxes, you may not be aware you have become a victim of identity theft until you receive a letter from the Internal Revenue Service.

Usually, an identity thief uses a legitimate taxpayer's identity to fraudulently file a tax return and claim a refund. They generally do this by using a stolen SSN and filing a forged tax return with the attempt to get a fraudulent refund early in the filing season.

You may be unaware that this has happened until you file your tax return later in the filing season and discover that two returns were 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 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.

If you receive a notice from IRS, **respond immediately**. If you believe someone may have used your SSN fraudulently, please notify IRS using the telephone number printed on the notice or letter. You will also need to fill out the IRS Identity Theft Affidavit, [Form 14039](#).

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

The IRS also created a special section on [IRS.gov](#) dedicated to identity theft issues, including tips and a special guide for assistance. Consult the [Taxpayer Guide to Identity Theft](#) and the [IRS Identity Theft Protection page](#) on IRS.gov for more information.

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**NOTE TO EDITOR: Below are links on IRS.gov to more information on Identity Theft:**

[Taxpayer Guide to Identity Theft](#)

[IRS Identity Theft Protection page](#)

#### You Tube Videos

- [Are you a victim of Identity Theft?](#) - find out how the IRS can help you if you become a victim of identity theft.
- [Protect yourself from Identity Theft](#) - find out how you can protect yourself from identity theft.

[Form 14039](#) – Identity Theft Affidavit