

# IRS News Release

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Media Relations Office

Washington, D.C.

Media Contact: 202.317.4000

[www.irs.gov/newsroom](http://www.irs.gov/newsroom)Public Contact: 800.829.1040

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## **National Tax Security Week Concludes; IRS, Security Summit Partners Continue Work to Protect Taxpayers in 2017**

IR-2016-166, Dec. 9, 2016

WASHINGTON – The Internal Revenue Service and Security Summit partners urged taxpayers to take immediate steps to protect their personal data to strengthen expanded efforts being taken this upcoming tax season by federal, state and tax industry leaders against identity theft and refund fraud.

The Security Summit, an unprecedented collaborative effort between the IRS, the states and the nation's tax industry, announced in November plans to improve identity theft and refund fraud protections for individual and business taxpayers for the 2017 filing season.

"The collective efforts of the IRS, the states and the tax industry have provided new and important protections for taxpayers, which will continue to expand during the 2017 filing season," said IRS Commissioner John Koskinen. "These steps will be even more effective if taxpayers and tax professionals take action now to secure their data and computers before tax season begins. We all have an important role to play in protecting against identity theft and refund fraud."

This is the final part of a week-long effort to alert taxpayers and tax professionals to security threats during the "National Tax Security Awareness Week." This week, the IRS, states and the tax community sent out a series of reminders to taxpayers and tax professionals as a part of the ongoing Security Summit effort, which will continue with expanded protections against refund fraud and identity theft during the 2017 filing season.

For all "National Tax Security Awareness Week" information, visit the [Security Summit](#) page on IRS.gov.

### **More Safeguards Planned for 2017**

The IRS and Summit partners have announced new and expanded safeguards for the 2017 filing season that will help ensure the authenticity of the taxpayer and the tax return.

Many of the "trusted customer" features for 2017 will not be visible to taxpayers, but will help the IRS and states continue to make improvements in detecting fraudulent identity theft returns and protecting taxpayers. Highlights include:

- The tax industry will provide information to strengthen the authentication that a tax return is being filed by the real taxpayer.
- The tax industry will share information extending more identity theft protections to business filers and individuals.

- More than 20 states are working to create a program to flag suspicious refunds before being deposited into taxpayer accounts.
- The Form W-2 Verification Code initiative will expand to 50 million forms in 2017 from 2 million in 2016.
- The software industry will continue to enhance software password requirements – providing additional safety prior to filing.

In addition, a new Identity Theft Tax Refund Fraud Information Sharing and Analysis Center, or ISAC, will be launched in 2017. The ISAC will serve as an improved early warning system – identifying emerging identity theft schemes and quickly sharing that information among key, participating partners.

### **Summit Helps Produce Successes in 2016 Against Identity Theft**

At a Washington press conference in November, Summit leaders announced making significant inroads this year against fraudulent returns. In 2016, the number of taxpayers reporting stolen identities on federal tax returns fell by more than 50 percent, with nearly 275,000 fewer victims compared to a year ago.

Security Summit initiatives put in place in 2016 had a dramatic impact on the collective ability to identify and stop fraudulent returns. Key IRS statistics show Summit efforts were successful at preventing fraudulent returns from entering tax return processing systems. This meant fewer bad returns, fewer bad refunds and fewer taxpayers becoming victims.

### **Security Reminders for Taxpayers**

The IRS and its partners remind taxpayers they can do their part to help in this effort. Taxpayers and tax professionals should:

- Always use security software with firewall and anti-virus protections. Make sure the security software is always turned on and can automatically update. Encrypt sensitive files such as tax records you store on your computer. Use strong passwords.
- Learn to recognize and avoid phishing emails, threatening phone calls and texts from thieves posing as legitimate organizations such as your bank, credit card company and government organizations, including the IRS. Do not click on links or download attachments from unknown or suspicious emails.
- Protect your personal data. Don't routinely carry your Social Security card, and make sure your tax records are secure. Treat your personal information like you do your cash; don't leave it lying around.

More Security Summit details are available in:

IR-2016-144, [IRS, Security Summit Partners Expand Identity Theft Safeguards for 2017 Filing Season, Build on 2016 Successes](#)

FS-2015-23, [IRS, States and Industry Partners Provide Update on Collaborative Fight Against Tax-Related Identity Theft](#)

## **Additional IRS Resources**

**IRS Tax Tip:** [IRS, Partners Add New Safeguard for 2017; Ask for Your Help to Combat Identity Theft](#)