



Protect Your Clients

Tips for Tax Pros to Combat Identity Theft



- **Use multi-factor authentication to protect tax preparation software accounts.** All tax software providers now offer multi-factor authentication options, which require more than just a username and password to access accounts.
- **Encourage clients to get an Identity Protection PINs.** The IP PIN is a six-digit number that is known only to the taxpayer and the IRS. It helps prevent an identity thief from filing a fraudulent return in the taxpayer's name.
- **Help clients fight unemployment compensation fraud.** One of the larger scams of 2020 involved identity thieves using stolen identities to file for unemployment compensation benefits with the states during the pandemic-induced economic downturn.
- **Avoid spear phishing scams.** Thieves take time to craft personalized emails to entice tax professionals to open a link embedded in the email or open an attachment. For 2020, tax pros were especially vulnerable to spear phishing scams from thieves posing as potential clients.
- **Know the signs of identity theft.** These include multiple clients suddenly receiving IRS letters requesting confirmation that they filed a tax return deemed suspicious. Tax professionals may see e-file acknowledgments for far more tax returns than they filed.