



## **Identity Theft and Your Tax Returns**

1. DON'T open emails from any government agency or electronic tax payment agency. Federal, State and Local governments will only contact you via US mail. They will not initiate a contact via email. This is known as Phishing.
2. DON'T give anyone your tax returns without blocking out all but the last four digits of you and your spouse and dependent's social security numbers.
3. DON'T give anyone a copy of your W-2 without blocking out all but the last four digits of your social security number.
4. DON'T write your social security number on a check. Just list the last four digits indicating it is the last four digits.
5. DON'T give out any personal information to any one claiming to be from the IRS or the State or any other agency without a written request. Let us review the request to insure it's legitimate.
6. DO verify the recipients email if you're sending copies of your returns in an email. Send a test email to be sure. Ask for them to give you an answer to a question only they would know like the name of your street. Then send the documents using a password to open them. Give the verified recipient the password via a separate email or by telephone.
7. DO buy a personal shredder and shred all documents containing personal information. They cost under \$50! Guard your trash!
8. DO give us written permission to send out your tax return information with specific instructions. Know that we do not disclose your personal information to third parties without your permission. We can and do block out the social security numbers also.

### **If you've been a victim, here's what to do:**

1. Place a "Fraud Alert" on your credit reports, and review the reports carefully.  
AnnualCreditReport.com is the ONLY authorized source for the free annual credit report
  - a. Equifax – [www.equifax.com](http://www.equifax.com), 800-525-6285
  - b. Experian – [www.experian.com](http://www.experian.com), 888-397-3742
  - c. TransUnion – [www.transunion.com](http://www.transunion.com), 800-680-7289
2. Call anyone who has issued you credit such as your bank and credit card companies.
3. File a police report.
4. Report the theft to the Federal Trade Commission. Your report helps law enforcement officials across the country in their investigations.
  - a. Online: • [www.consumer.ftc.gov](http://www.consumer.ftc.gov)
  - b. By phone: 1-877-ID-THEFT (438-4338) • or TTY, 1-866-653-4261
  - c. By mail: Identity Theft Clearinghouse, • Federal Trade Commission, Washington, DC 20580

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