

# T X SEASON



The IRS is committed to protecting you from identity theft. However, cybercriminals are constantly evolving. The Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office needs you to take a few simple steps to protect your personal and financial data online and at home.

Please consider these steps to protect yourselves during tax season:

## Keep Your Computer Secure

- Use security software and make sure it updates automatically
- Essential software tools include a firewall, virus/malware protection and file encryption
- Treat your personal information like cash, don't leave it lying around or in vehicles
- Check out online companies to find out who you're really dealing with
- Give personal information only over encrypted websites – look for “https” addresses.
- Use strong passwords and protect them from view
- Back up your files with a cloud service or thumb drives

## Avoid Phishing and Malware

- Avoid phishing emails, texts or calls that appear to be from the IRS and companies you know and trust, go directly to their websites instead
- Don't open attachments in emails unless you know who sent it and what it is
- Download and install software only from websites you know and trust
- Use a pop-up blocker
- Talk to your family about safe computing

## Protect Personal Information

Don't routinely carry your social security card or documents with your SSN on them. Do not overshare personal information on social media. Information about past addresses, a new car, a new home and your children help identity thieves pose as you. Keep old tax returns and tax records under lock and key or encrypted if electronic. Shred tax documents before trashing.

Avoid IRS Impersonators. The IRS will not call you with threats of jail or lawsuits. The IRS will not send you an unsolicited email suggesting you have a refund or that you need to update your account. The IRS will not request any sensitive information online. These are all scams, and they are persistent. Don't fall for them. Forward IRS-related scam emails to [phishing@irs.gov](mailto:phishing@irs.gov) Report IRS-impersonation telephone calls at [www.tigta.gov](http://www.tigta.gov).

## Additional steps

- Get your taxes done as soon as possible to avoid a criminal from filing in your name
- Check your credit report annually, check your bank and credit card statements often
- Review your Social Security Administration records annually
- Sign up for My Social Security at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)
- If you are an identity theft victim whose tax account is affected, review [www.irs.gov/identitytheft](http://www.irs.gov/identitytheft) for details.

For more Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention Tips go to: [www.pbso.org/crimeprevention](http://www.pbso.org/crimeprevention)

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