

Dept. of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection: Observe Identity Theft Awareness Week

Posted on Monday, Jan 30, 2023

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MADISON, Wis. – While taxpayers prepare their 2022 state and federal tax returns, they can also minimize the risk of identity theft by keeping their personal information private and secure. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR) are teaming up during Identity Theft Awareness Week to encourage the public to keep their documents and data safe.

“Most consumers know about the danger of identity theft and assume it won’t happen to them,” said DATCP Secretary Randy Romanski. “Everyone can and should make a conscious effort to reduce their personal risk, including securely storing their personal information.”

“We take identify theft seriously,” said DOR Secretary Peter Barca. “For extra protection, we strongly suggest taxpayers request an identity protection personal identification number, or IP PIN, from us before filing their state income taxes or homestead credit claims.”

According to DATCP, identity theft remains one of the most reported consumer issues in Wisconsin. If a thief uses your Social Security number (SSN) to steal your tax refund, you may not know until you attempt to file your taxes and are informed that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has already received a tax return in your name. Follow these tips to protect your identity this tax season:

- Never store your SSN on any device that may be vulnerable to data thieves or viruses.

- File your taxes as early as possible so identity thieves don't have a chance to do it first. This also grants you more time to resolve any issues before returns are due on Tax Day, which is April 18, 2023.
- Use a mailbox lock or consider having your mail sent to a Post Office Box to prevent anyone from stealing your personal information via mail.
- Use a shredder or similar method to dispose of unneeded documents containing personal information such as your SSN or IRS account number.
- Sign up for federal and state Identity Protection Personal Identification Numbers (IP PINs) with the [IRS](#) and [DOR](#) to add an extra layer of security to your tax filings.

If you notice a problem with your tax return or suspect fraud, contact the IRS at www.irs.gov or (1-800) 908-4490. Specialists can help file tax returns, process refunds, and protect your information. If you confirm that your identity was stolen, inform your bank(s) and creditor(s) of your stolen identity, place a security freeze on your credit report with all three major credit reporting agencies, and call DATCP's Consumer Protection Hotline at (800) 422-7128.

For additional information and consumer protection resources or to file a complaint, visit DATCP's Consumer Protection webpage at ConsumerProtection.wi.gov. If you have questions or believe you are a victim of a scam, report it by contacting DATCP's Consumer Protection Hotline by phone at (800) 422-7128 or email at DATCPHotline@wi.gov.