



# Rhode Island Department of Revenue Division of Taxation

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TAX ADMINISTRATION

ADVISORY FOR TAX PROFESSIONALS  
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## **Tax professionals cautioned about threats from cybercriminals** *Security awareness tip from Internal Revenue Service and Rhode Island Division of Taxation*

The Internal Revenue Service and the Rhode Island Division of Taxation today warned tax professionals of the continuing threat from cybercriminals and launched a series of security tips to encourage stronger measures to protect taxpayer data.



The IRS, the Rhode Island Division of Taxation, tax agencies from other states, and the tax industry have joined as the Security Summit to implement a series of initiatives to help guard against tax-related identity theft in 2017.

Security Summit partners note that cybercriminals worldwide are actively targeting tax professionals in an effort to steal taxpayer information that would allow them to file fraudulent tax returns for refunds.

The Summit group, a partnership between the public and private sectors, urged the tax community to take steps now to protect information before the 2017 filing season. This week, the IRS, the states and the tax community are sending out a series of reminders to taxpayers and tax professionals during “National Tax Security Awareness Week,” as part of the ongoing Security Summit effort.

The Security Summit partners recently expanded their ongoing public awareness campaign by launching the “Protect Your Clients; Protect Yourself” campaign.

As part of this initiative, the partners will issue weekly security awareness tax tips through January aimed at tax professionals.

Most tax professionals already have strong security measures, but some continue to be vulnerable to various scams or security weaknesses.

The “Protect Your Clients; Protect Yourself” campaign comes as Security Summit partners have issued a number of alerts warning of cybercriminal efforts to breach tax preparers’ digital defenses through a variety of schemes.

“Cybercriminals worldwide are actively targeting tax professionals in an effort to steal taxpayer information that would allow them to file fraudulent tax returns for refunds.”

Recent warnings include:

- E-mail phishing schemes posing as potential clients, trying to trick preparers into downloading malware onto their computers.
- Phishing e-mails that pose as IRS e-Services and attempt to steal e-Services users' usernames and passwords.
- Remote takeover schemes in which cybercriminals actually take control of preparers' computers and file fraudulent tax returns.

The series of security awareness tips focus on security measures tax professionals should take to better protect taxpayer data and to guard against the ever-evolving nature of identity theft and refund fraud.

The IRS also strongly urges all tax professionals to sign up for official IRS communications such as e-News for Tax Professionals. There also are social media options including [Twitter.com/IRStaxpros](https://twitter.com/IRStaxpros). Also, tax professionals can help spread the word on this week's messages using the hashtag #TaxSecurity in social media platforms.



*The Security Summit partners recently announced “National Tax Security Awareness Week.” As part of the Security Summit effort, the IRS, the states, and the tax community will share a variety of information throughout this week to educate taxpayers on steps they should take to protect themselves from identity theft and tax scams as well as protect their valuable financial data in advance of the upcoming filing season.*

To learn more about protecting your personal and financial data, see:  
<https://www.irs.gov/individuals/taxes-security-together>.

See also IRS Publication 4524, “Security Awareness for Taxpayers,” using the following link:  
<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p4524.pdf>.

Tips for tax professionals:  
<https://www.irs.gov/individuals/protect-your-clients-protect-yourself>

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#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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To reach the Rhode Island Division of Taxation, call the Division's main phone line at (401) 574-8829. The Division is normally open to the public from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. business days, and is located at One Capitol Hill in Providence, in the Powers Building, which is diagonally across Smith Street from the State House. For forms, instructions, and other information, see the Division website: [www.tax.ri.gov](http://www.tax.ri.gov). To reach specific sections with the agency, by phone or email, use the following address: [www.tax.ri.gov/contact/](http://www.tax.ri.gov/contact/)