



# Rhode Island Department of Revenue

## Division of Taxation

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SECURITY SUMMIT

ADVISORY FOR TAX PROFESSIONALS  
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### **Tax professionals should learn signs of data theft**

*You can be a critical first line of defense, aiding clients, Security Summit says*

PROVIDENCE -- The Rhode Island Division of Taxation, the Internal Revenue Service, and other partners in the Security Summit urge tax professionals to learn the signs of data theft so they can react quickly to protect clients.



"There are tell-tale signs of identity theft that tax pros can easily miss," said IRS Commissioner Chuck Rettig. "Identity thieves continue to look for ways to slip into the systems of tax pros to steal data. We urge practitioners to take simple steps and remain on the lookout for signs of data and identity theft. They are a critical first line of defense against identity theft."

The Security Summit is especially focused this year on urging tax professionals to try harder to secure their systems and protect client data amid the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, said Rhode Island Tax Administrator Neena Savage.

#### **Look for critical signs**

One common refrain often heard from tax professionals reporting data theft is that they did not immediately recognize the warning signs. The Security Summit urges tax professionals to watch out for the following critical signs.

- Your client's e-filed returns are rejected because the client's Social Security number was already used on another return.
- You've received more e-file acknowledgements than returns you e-filed.
- Clients have responded to emails that you did not send.
- You experience slow or unexpected computer or network responsiveness, such as the following:
  - Your software takes longer than usual to perform tasks.
  - Your computer cursor moves or changes numbers without your touching the mouse or keyboard.
  - You're unexpectedly locked out of a network or computer.

## Warning signs from clients

Tax professionals also should watch for warning signs based on what their clients are reporting. Following are some examples.

- A client has received IRS Authentication letters (5071C, 4883C, 5747C) even though the client hasn't filed a return.
- A client receives a refund even though the client hasn't filed a return.
- A client receives a tax transcript that the client didn't request.
- A client receives emails or phone calls supposedly from you, but you didn't initiate the call.
- A client receives a notice that someone created an IRS online account for the taxpayer without their consent.
- A client receives a notice the taxpayer wasn't expecting that:
  - Someone accessed their IRS online account, and
  - The IRS disabled their online account.



For information about reporting data theft, see the following IRS webpage: <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/data-theft-information-for-tax-professionals>

## About this announcement

The Security Summit partners are conducting the 2021 "Protect Your Clients; Protect Yourself" summer campaign aimed at tax professionals. This year's theme is "Boost Security Immunity: Fighting Against Identity Theft". It's intended to urge tax professionals to step up their efforts to protect client data amid the pandemic and its aftermath.

## About the Security Summit

The Security Summit consists of the IRS, state tax agencies, and the tax community -- including tax preparation firms, software developers, processors of payroll and tax financial products, tax professional organizations, and financial institutions. Partners in the Security Summit work together to combat identity theft and fight other scams to protect the nation's taxpayers. For more information: <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/security-summit>.

*The Rhode Island Division of Taxation is open to the public from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. business days. To learn more, see the agency's website: [www.tax.ri.gov](http://www.tax.ri.gov).*