



Rhode Island Department of Revenue

Division of Taxation

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Tax Administration

ADVISORY FOR TAXPAYERS AND TAX PROFESSIONALS
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Division warns of identity theft

What to do if you have been impacted and how to prevent it

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – The Rhode Island Division of Taxation today suggested steps to take if you have been a victim of identity theft.

With tax preparation and filing season right around the corner at the end of January, the New Year is an especially critical time to protect yourself and your personal information. Identity theft, or fraud, is a crime, and often results in the loss of personal data, such as passwords, usernames, banking information, or credit card numbers.



Identity theft occurs when someone uses your Social Security number or other personal information without your knowledge to open new accounts or make purchases. During filing season, criminals may also attempt to file fraudulent tax returns in your name to steal the refund amount.

“Identity theft can also involve your taxes: Tax-related identity theft happens when someone steals your personal information to commit tax fraud,” said Rhode Island Tax Administrator Neena Savage. “Your taxes can be affected if your Social Security number is used to file a fraudulent return or to claim a refund or credit,” Savage added.

The Division recommends that if you are the victim of identity theft, you follow these steps:

- 1.** Contact your local police department to file a police report.

2. Fill out the Internal Revenue Service’s “Identity Theft Affidavit” (Form 14039), available at: <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f14039.pdf> (see preview below).

Form 14039 (December 2020)	Department of the Treasury - Internal Revenue Service Identity Theft Affidavit	OMB Number 1545-2139
Complete this form if you need the IRS to mark an account to identify questionable activity.		
Section A - Check the following boxes in this section that apply to the specific situation you are reporting (Required for all filers)		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. I am submitting this Form 14039 for myself		

3. Let the Division of Taxation know, in writing, that you are a victim of identity theft, and attach a copy of the completed federal Form 14039 mentioned above. Send the letter to:
Rhode Island Division of Taxation
Personal Income Tax – Identity Theft
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908
4. See the Rhode Island State Police’s “Identity Theft, Fraud & Scams” webpage for tips and guidance: <https://risp.ri.gov/safety/internet/fraud.php>.
5. See the Federal Trade Commission’s “IdentityTheft.gov” website: <https://www.identitytheft.gov/>

Prevention is key in protecting yourself from identity theft. Start by keeping your digital information safe. To help prevent criminals from accessing sensitive data, the Division recommends the following measures:

- Use security and anti-virus software on computers, tablets, and mobile phones, and
 - Set software for automatic updates to keep systems secure.
 - Make sure anti-virus software for computers has a feature to stop malware, and there is a firewall enabled that can prevent intrusions.
 - Remember to protect the devices of all family members, especially teens and young children.
- Use strong passwords and multi-factor authentication to protect all online accounts, especially tax products, cloud software providers, email providers, and social media.
- Back up sensitive files to secure external sources, such as an external hard drive or cloud storage.
- Take extra care with your online activities.
 - Shop at sites where the web address begins with "https" – the "s" is for secure communications over the computer network. Also, look for the “padlock” icon in the browser window.

- Many criminals steal personal data when shoppers use their phones to make purchases over unsecured Wi-Fi networks.
- Look out for phishing scams like imposter emails, calls, and texts. These are the No. 1 way thieves steal personal data.
 - Don't open links or attachments on suspicious emails.
 - This year, fraud scams related to COVID-19, Economic Impact Payments and other tax law changes are common.
- Working from home? Consider creating a virtual private network (VPN) to securely connect to your workplace.

The Rhode Island Division of Taxation, part of the Rhode Island Department of Revenue, is open to the public from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. business days. For more information, contact the Division of Taxation at (401) 574-8829 or see <https://tax.ri.gov/about-us/contact-us>.
