



Too close to home – identity theft on tax returns

Unfortunately, one of our clients can tell this true story –

We filed a tax return for "John Doe." John received a notice in the mail from the IRS saying that a tax return had already been filed using the same SSN. John was very understandably upset and wanted to know how this could happen.

Here's what happens, all too often:

Your social security number can [be stolen in a number of different ways](#). A thief fills out a tax return using your SSN and a false name. The electronic return is filed showing a refund due to the thief's bank account. When we file your real tax return, you receive a notice of duplication. If this happens to you, let your tax preparer know immediately. We will file an [IRS Theft Affidavit, Form 14039](#) to resolve your issue with the IRS. You will then be assigned a PIN that stays connected with your SSN for all future tax returns.

Be alert to possible identity theft if you receive an IRS notice or letter that states:

1. More than one tax return was filed for you.
2. You have a balance due, refund offset or have had collection actions taken against you for a year in which you did not file a tax return.
3. IRS records indicate that you received wages from an employer unknown to you.

The IRS will not email you to request personal or financial information. If you receive emails indicating they are from the IRS, they are phishing attempts and you should forward to phishing@irs.gov. For phishing scams by phone, fax or mail, call 800-366-4484.

Protect your identity by:

- Not carrying your SSN in your wallet or purse.
- Not giving your SSN unless absolutely necessary.
- Checking your credit report once a year for fraudulent activity.
- Keeping your computer anti-virus and firewalls up-to-date, and changing passwords periodically.
- Not giving personal information to anyone via phone, mail or internet unless you initiate contact or are certain of the person's identity.

If you are a victim, in addition to contacting us, you'll need to notify the following credit bureaus:

Equifax – www.equifax.com, 800-525-6285

Experian – www.experian.com, 888-397-3742

TransUnion – www.transunion.com, 800-680-7289

For more information on taxpayer identity theft visit the [IRS Web site](#).