

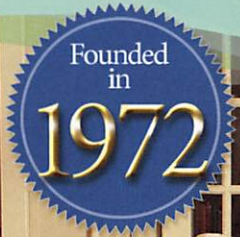
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# Have You Heard About Tax Identity Theft?

Ready for tax season? If you haven't heard about tax identity theft, you may not be. Tax identity theft is the most common form of identity theft reported to the Federal Trade Commission. Tax identity theft happens when someone files a phony tax return using your personal information – like your Social Security number – to get a tax refund from the IRS. Here's what you can do to lessen the chance you'll be a victim:

- If you can, file your tax return early in the tax season. A “phony filer” will have less time to use your Social Security number and file for a tax refund before you do.
- The IRS does not initiate contact with a taxpayer by sending an email, text, or social media message that asks for your personal or financial information. If you get an email that claims to be from the IRS, do not reply or click on any links.
- What if you are a victim? Tax identity theft victims typically find out about the crime when they get a letter from the IRS saying that more than one tax return was filed in their name. If you get a letter like this, don't panic! Contact the IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit at 1-800-908-4490.

(Information courtesy of the Federal Trade Commission)

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