



IRS Security Awareness Tax Tip Number 5: Talk to Your Family about Security Online and at Home

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IRS Tax Tips

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Issue Number: IRS Security Awareness Tax Tip Number 5
Inside This Issue

Talk to Your Family about Security Online and at Home

For families with children and aging parents, it's important to make sure everyone guards their personal information online and at home.

It may be time for "the conversation."

The IRS, state revenue departments and the tax industry have teamed up to combat identity theft in the tax arena. Our theme: [Taxes. Security. Together.](#) Working in partnership with you, we can make a difference.

Especially in families that use the same computer, students should be warned against turning off any security software in use or opening any suspicious emails. They should be instructed to never click on embedded links or download attachments of emails from unknown sources.

Identity thieves are just one of many predators plying the Internet. And, actions by one computer user could infect the machine for all users. That's a concern when dealing with personal financial details or tax information.

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Kids should be warned against oversharing personal information on social media. But oversharing about home addresses, a new family car or a parent's new job gives identity thieves a window into an extra bit of information they need to impersonate you.

Aging parents also are prime targets for identity thieves. If they are browsing the Internet, they made need to the same conversation about online security, avoiding spam email schemes and oversharing on social media.

They may also need assistance for someone to routinely review charges to their credit cards, withdrawals from their financial accounts. Unused credit cards should be canceled. An annual review should be made of their credit reports at annualcreditreport.com to ensure no new accounts are being opened by thieves, and reviewing the [Social Security Administration](#) account to ensure no excessive income is accruing to their account.

Seniors also are especially vulnerable to scam calls and pressure from fraudsters posing as legitimate organizations, including the Internal Revenue Service, and demanding payment for debts not owed. The IRS will never make threats of lawsuit or jail or demand that a certain payment method, such as a debit card, be made.

Fraudsters will try to trick seniors, telling them they have won a grand prize in a contest or that a relative needs money – anything to persuade a person to give up personal information such as their Social Security number or financial account information.

Some simple steps – and a conversation – can help the young and old avoid identity theft schemes and scammers.

To learn additional steps you can take to protect your personal and financial data, visit [Taxes. Security. Together.](#) You also can read [Publication 4524](#), Security Awareness for Taxpayers.

Each and every taxpayer has a set of fundamental rights they should be aware of when dealing with the IRS. These are your [Taxpayer Bill of Rights](#). Explore your rights and our obligations to protect them on IRS.gov.

Additional IRS Resources:

- [IRS Urges Public to Stay Alert for Scam Phone Calls](#)
- [Stay Vigilant Against Bogus IRS Phone Calls and](#)

[Emails](#)

- [Report Phishing and Online Scams](#)
- [IRS Commissioner Koskinen's Statement on the Security Summit Group Public Awareness Campaign](#)
- www.irs.gov/identitytheft -- Identity Protection: Prevention, Detection and Victim Assistance
- [IR-2015-129](#), IRS, States and Tax Industry Announce New Steps to Help Public to Protect Personal Tax Data
- [Fact Sheet 2015-23](#), IRS, States and Industry Partners Provide Update on Collaborative Fight Against Tax-Related Identity Theft
- [IRS and Partner Statements on the October 2015 Security Summit Meeting](#)

IRS YouTube Videos:

- *Taxes. Security. Together.* – [English](#)
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[Back to Top](#)

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