



## *Financially Speaking...*

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### **FIVE STEPS TAXPAYERS CAN TAKE NOW TO PROTECT AGAINST IDENTITY THEFT**

All taxpayers should make sure they're doing everything they can to prevent a thief from stealing their identity. Tax-related ID theft occurs when someone uses a taxpayer's stolen personal information to file a tax return claiming a fraudulent refund. The thieves use personal information like a stolen Social Security number.

The IRS and its partners are constantly working to combat these types of crimes, but they can't do it alone. Taxpayers play an important role when it comes to preventing identity theft. Here are some tips to help taxpayers protect themselves against identity theft. Taxpayers should:

- Always use security software. This software should have firewall and anti-virus protections.
- Use strong, unique passwords. They should also consider using a password manager.
- Learn to recognize and avoid phishing emails, threatening calls and texts from thieves. These scammers pose as legitimate organizations such as banks, credit card companies, and even the IRS.
- Never click on links in unsolicited emails or messages from unknown senders. Also, people shouldn't click on links or download attachments from emails that seem suspicious, even if they appear to be from senders they know.
- Protect personal information and that of any dependents. For example, people shouldn't routinely carry around their Social Security cards. They should also make sure tax records are secure.

With so much of our personal information out on the Internet, ID theft will always be a danger. Taking the steps above will make it less likely you'll become a victim.

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