

IRS, Partners Warn Tax Preparers of Data Theft Risks

Leaders from the Internal Revenue Service, state tax agencies and tax preparation community today warned tax preparers that they increasingly are targets of cybercriminals and should take appropriate steps to protect clients from data theft.

IRS also posted new information to help tax professionals get started with safeguards to protect clients' data. It's the first in a series of fact sheets and tips on security, scams and identity theft prevention measures aimed at tax professionals. The Protect Your Clients; Protect Yourself campaign will run through the start of the 2017 filing season.

Recognizing the risk to tax preparers, this new effort is an expansion of the Security Summit's 2015 ["Taxes. Security. Together."](#) campaign aimed at increasing public awareness for using security software, creating stronger passwords and avoiding phishing emails.

"We have more than 700,000 tax preparers in this country, with many of those taking good security precautions," said IRS Commissioner John Koskinen. "But cybercriminals are continuing to evolve, using new technology, ruses and scams. The tax community handles large volumes of sensitive personal and financial information. We need every tax professional to stay on top of their security to protect taxpayers as well as their businesses."

Fact Sheet 2016-23, "Tax Professionals: Protect Your Clients; Protect Yourself from Identity Theft," urges preparers to follow the security recommendations found in [Publication 4557](#), Safeguarding Taxpayer Data. The fact sheet outlines the critical steps necessary to protect taxpayer information and to build customer confidence and trust.

Preparers should sign up for [e-News for Tax Professionals](#), the IRS [Tax Pro Twitter](#) Account and the Return Preparer Office's [Facebook](#) page to stay informed about this campaign and about scams and schemes in general. The IRS also is creating a Protect Your Clients; Protect Yourself page on IRS.gov.

The Security Summit consists of the IRS, state tax agencies and the private-sector tax industry working together to safeguard taxpayers from tax-related identity theft. On June 28, Summit partners announced their [2017 initiatives](#) to combat stolen identity refund fraud.