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up, officials warn.

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With tax season upon us, the most common form of identity theft has been popping up, officials warn.

The Federal Trade Commission says it happens when someone files a phony tax return using another person's personal information — like your Social Security number — to get a tax refund from the Internal Revenue Service.

Tax identity theft also happens when someone uses an individual's Social Security number to get a job or claims your child as a dependent on a tax return.

Capt. Chris Smith of the Kokomo Police Department said there haven't been any cases locally so far this year, but there were several cases last year in which KPD worked with the IRS.

Nationally, it's becoming a growing problem with cases increasing by 66 percent in the last year, Smith said.

“In 2013, the IRS initiated 1,492 cases compared to 892 in 2012,” he said. “It's growing pretty fast.”

Identity theft can also affect how your tax return is processed. An unexpected notice or letter from the IRS could alert you that someone else is using your Social Security number; however, the IRS doesn't start contact with a taxpayer by sending an email, text or social media message that asks for personal or financial information. If you get an email that claims to be from the IRS, do not reply or click on any links. Instead, forward it to phishing@irs.gov.

If someone does use your Social Security number to file for a tax refund before you do,

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at 1-800-908-4490, your local law enforcement agency and file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission.

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