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The IRS has issued a filing season alert, warning taxpayers and tax professionals to watch out for identity theft at tax time, and highlighted the crime as a recurring scam in the agency's "[Dirty Dozen](#)" series.

The Dirty Dozen is compiled annually by the IRS and lists a variety of common scams taxpayers may encounter any time during the year. Many of these con games peak during filing season as people prepare their tax returns or hire tax professionals.

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2017 and continue to seek new and expanded ways to reduce identity theft. Because of these successes, criminals are devising more creative ways to steal personal information and impersonate taxpayers.

“The Security Summit partnership continues to develop and strengthen tools to stop fraudulent returns from getting into the tax system,” said IRS Commissioner John Koskinen. “We’re calling on taxpayers to do everything they can to protect their private information because criminals continue looking for new and more sophisticated ways of beating the system. We also encourage tax professionals and others in the private and non-profit sectors with access to large amounts of sensitive information to watch out for identity theft schemes.”

Security Reminders for Taxpayers

The IRS and its partners remind taxpayers they can do their part to help in this effort. Taxpayers and tax professionals should:

- Always use security software with firewall and anti-virus protections. Make sure the security software is always turned on and can automatically update. Encrypt sensitive files such as tax records stored on the computer. Use strong passwords.
- Learn to recognize and avoid phishing emails, threatening phone calls and texts from thieves posing as legitimate organizations such as banks, credit card companies and government organizations, including the IRS. Do not click on links or download attachments from unknown or suspicious emails.
- Protect personal data. Don't routinely carry a Social Security card, and make sure tax records are secure. Treat personal information like cash; don't leave it lying around.

“Everyone should guard their personal information by protecting their computers and using extreme caution when viewing emails or getting surprise phone calls,”

Koskinen said. “We also encourage people to share this information with their

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Tax-related identity theft occurs when someone uses a stolen Social Security number or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) to file a tax return claiming a fraudulent refund.

The IRS understands that undoing the damage caused by identity theft is a frustrating and complex process for victims. While identity thieves steal information from sources outside the tax system, the IRS is often the first to inform a victim that identity theft has occurred. The IRS is working hard to resolve identity theft cases as quickly as possible. For more information, see the special [identity theft section on IRS.gov](#)

Technology

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