

## Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office

### *Identity Theft Safety Tips*

Residents can encounter identity theft involving their tax returns in several ways. One instance is where identity thieves try filing fraudulent refund claims using another person's identifying information, which has been stolen. Innocent taxpayers are victimized because their refunds are delayed.

#### **Tips to protect you from becoming a victim of identity theft:**

- Don't carry your Social Security card or any documents that include your Social Security number (SSN) or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN).
- Don't give a business your SSN or ITIN just because they ask. Give it only when required.
- Protect your financial information.
- Check your credit report every 12 months.
- Secure personal information in your home.
- Protect your personal computers by using firewalls and anti-spam/virus software, updating security patches and changing passwords for Internet accounts.
- Don't give personal information over the phone, through the mail or on the Internet unless you have initiated the contact or you are sure you know who you are dealing with.

If your tax records are not currently affected by identity theft, but you believe you may be at risk due to a lost or stolen purse or wallet, questionable credit card activity or credit report, contact the IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit at (800) 908-4490 Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

#### **If you believe you're a victim of identity theft:**

- You have a balance due, refund offset or have had collection actions taken against you for a year you did not file a tax return;
- IRS records indicate you received more wages than you actually earned; your state or federal benefits were reduced or cancelled because the agency received information reporting an income change.
- If you receive a notice from the IRS and you suspect your identity has been used fraudulently, respond immediately by calling the number on the notice.
- If you did not receive an IRS notice but believe you've been the victim of identity theft, contact the IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit at 800-908-4490 right away so we can take steps to secure your tax account and match your SSN or ITIN.
- Also, fill out the IRS Identity Theft Affidavit, [Form 14039](#). Please write legibly and follow the directions on the back of the form that relate to your specific circumstances.

**In addition, we recommend you take additional steps with agencies outside the IRS:**

Report incidents of [identity theft to the Federal Trade Commission](#) at [www.consumer.ftc.gov](http://www.consumer.ftc.gov) or the FTC Identity Theft hotline at (877) 438-4338 or TTY (866) 653-4261.

File a report with the Sheriff's Office.

Contact the fraud departments of the three major credit bureaus:

Equifax – [www.equifax.com](http://www.equifax.com), (800) 525-6285

Experian – [www.experian.com](http://www.experian.com), (888) 397-3742

TransUnion – [www.transunion.com](http://www.transunion.com), (800) 680-7289

Close any accounts that have been tampered with or opened fraudulently.

More information is available at IRS.gov: <http://www.irs.gov/uac/Identity-Protection-Tips>

Taxpayer Guide to Identity Theft -- <http://www.irs.gov/uac/Taxpayer-Guide-to-Identity-Theft>