

## **Cyber Security Tip – Tax Season is Identity Theft Season, Be Prepared!**

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Welcome to 2016! As we begin another year, we will keep our eyes open and try to stay ahead of any threats that come our way.

The next thing coming is tax season. I know none of us probably look forward to that, but it is around the corner, and we need to keep ourselves protected. The IRS is stepping in to help taxpayers by using its own awareness site:

<https://www.irs.gov/Individuals/Taxes-Security-Together>

The site and awareness program is designed to protect your federal and state accounts from identity thieves.

Many of the steps the IRS is taking regarding your accounts are invisible to you but will help to verify the identity of the taxpayer and the validity of the tax return. There are new password standards for tax software and they are doing a better job sharing information about identity theft schemes. (See [Fact Sheet 2015-23](#) for details on their efforts.)

Here are some tips you can follow to protect your tax and financial information this season:

- **Give personal information over encrypted websites only. Look for “https.”**
- **Use strong passwords and protect your passwords.**
- **Always use security software with firewall and anti-virus protections.**
- **Learn to recognize and avoid phishing emails, threatening calls or texts.**
- **Protect your personal data and don’t leave it lying around.**
- **Save your tax returns and records and keep them in a safe place.**
- **Back up your files to removable media and store in a safe place.**