

## Safety Tips for Tax Season

During the annual tax season, consumers should be consciously aware of fraudsters and take measures to protect themselves against tax scams and identity theft. Consumers should be especially wary when filing annual income taxes independently online and upon receiving their State and Federal refund checks. Please be sure to take precautions and consider following these safety tips:

### **Take precautions when filing annual income taxes on your own electronically.**

Use strong and unique passwords. Never share your passwords with anyone. Your passwords should also be complex (i.e., at least eight characters and include numbers, upper and lowercase letters and symbols). Access the internet from a secure location. When connecting to the internet only use computers and networks you know and trust. Secure your computer and be sure you have a firewall turned on and are running antivirus software.

### **Consider having your refund check safely deposited into your account electronically.**

Refund checks sent through the mail can be lost, stolen, or returned to the IRS, if undeliverable. Having your refund check direct deposited into your bank account is not only is it faster, it's also more secure. You can also track the status of your federal tax return from the time the IRS received it by visiting <https://sa.www4.irs.gov/irfof/lang/en/irfofgetstatus.jsp> and filling out the appropriate information, or by downloading the mobile app IRS2GO at <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/irs2goapp>.

### **Do not respond to unsolicited emails.**

The IRS typically does not initiate emails to individuals asking for personal information. Before acting on any email allegedly from the IRS, call the agency at 800-829-1040. An agent will be able to verify whether the IRS is in fact trying to get in touch with you. If you are certain the contact was part of a scam, report it to the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration by calling 800-366-4484. You can also report unsolicited emails by forwarding it to [phishing@IRS.gov](mailto:phishing@IRS.gov).

### **Be wary of phone calls from anyone claiming to be from the IRS.**

Identity thieves have been known to pose as IRS agents, providing a fake name and IRS badge number and even creating a fake phone number that appears on caller ID as coming from the IRS. These thieves often threaten people with audits, deportation, and other legal action or promise checks for unclaimed funds.

### **Protect yourself against identity theft.**

If your personally identifiable information, such as your name, address, and Social Security number, has been compromised, the information can be used to file a fraudulent tax return in your name, allowing the thief to claim your refund. If you suspect that your information was stolen, contact the IRS by calling 800-908-4490 or visiting the IRS website for identity protection at [https:// www.irs.gov/identity-theft-fraud-scams](https://www.irs.gov/identity-theft-fraud-scams).

**For more internet security tips visit First County Bank's website  
Customer Resources and explore our [eFraud Prevention & Safety Tool](#)**

If you have any questions please call our Customer First Contact Center at (203) 462-4400 (Mon – Fri 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.)