



Identity Theft Awareness Week: Tips from DATCP and DOR

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MADISON, Wis. – Tax-related identity theft involves the theft and misuse of your Social Security number (SSN). It generally happens in one of two ways: someone uses your SSN to get a job and their employer reports that person’s income to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as if it were yours, or someone uses your SSN to file for your tax refund. You may not even know your identity has been stolen until the IRS informs you of the unreported income or multiple tax return filings.

This tax season, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR) are here to help. By taking a few proactive steps to keep your personal information private, you can reduce your risk of tax-related identity theft.

“Consumers should protect themselves from identity thieves, who are becoming craftier and more sophisticated every year,” said DATCP Secretary Randy Romanski. “There are many ways you can take preventative steps to keep your data safe and secure.”

Remember these tips to protect your identity this tax season:

- Never store your SSN on any device that may be vulnerable to malware or data theft.
- Install a mailbox lock or have your mail sent to a Post Office (PO) Box TM to prevent anyone from stealing sensitive information.
- Destroy unneeded documents containing personal information, such as your SSN or IRS account number, using a shredder or similar method.
- Sign up for [federal](#) and [state](#) Identity Protection Personal Identification Numbers (IP PINs) to add an extra layer of security to your tax filings.

"The goal of the PIN program is to keep refunds in the right hands and out of the pockets of fraudsters," said Department of Revenue Secretary Peter Barca. "Another important thing to keep in mind about fraud, is that unless you have contacted us first, we never call people without first sending a letter. So, if you are getting a call or a text from us, but you haven't received a letter from us, that's a red flag for fraud. We always send letters first."

If you believe you may be the victim of tax-related identity theft, contact DOR by phone or email as soon as possible. If you received a notice from DOR, respond to the contact listed on the notice. If you did not receive a notice or have concerns about the validity of a notice, contact DOR at (608) 266-2772 or DORIDTheft@wisconsin.gov. Instructions for reporting tax-related identity theft to the IRS are available on their [webpage](#). If you confirm your identity was stolen, immediately inform your bank(s) and creditor(s) of your stolen identity and place a security freeze on your credit report with all three major credit reporting agencies.

For more information about identity theft and additional consumer protection resources, visit DATCP’s Consumer Protection webpage at ConsumerProtection.wi.gov. DATCP’s Consumer Protection Hotline can be contacted at (800) 422-7128 or DATCPHotline@wisconsin.gov.

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