



Fraud Alert!

C.A.S.E.

Churches Against
Senior Exploitation

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Identity fraud can be taxing this time of year



Identity thieves offer residents a truly good reason to dread tax season and an incentive to file early. Tax fraud happens to people across the country every year in one of three ways:

1. Someone else uses your Social Security number to file a tax return and collect a refund.
2. Someone else uses your Social Security number to obtain a job, then the tax information you file doesn't match federal employment records.
3. Someone else claims your child as a dependent to get a tax break.

There are ways to be wise and protect your identity from trolling tax thieves.

- ✓ **Protect** your Social Security number and personal information year round. Never give this out over the phone, and always verify why a business may need it and how it is stored before giving it out in person.
- ✓ **Never** carry your Social Security card or number in your wallet or purse. Keep it in a secure location at home.
- ✓ **Never** toss papers that contain the number or other sensitive personal information in the trash. Shred them because identity thieves sometimes become Dumpster divers to obtain your information.
- ✓ **File** your tax return early in the season. This way, if someone fraudulently files a second form under your Social Security number, the legitimate return will already be on file and will flag the second as a fake.
- ✓ **Remember** that the Internal Revenue Service will contact you via letter if there is a problem or issue with your tax return. The agency does not contact residents by email, text or other social media.
- ✓ **Do not respond** to any electronic communication from the "IRS" seeking personal information, asking you to click a link or asking you to call to clear up an issue. Do not click the link.
- ✓ **Report** tax fraud immediately by calling the IRS at 1-800-908-4490, and forward fake emails to phishing@irs.gov.
- ✓ **Safeguard** other aspects of your life by checking bank and credit accounts, monitoring your credit report and changing online passwords.

Check out www.irs.gov/uac/Identity-Protection for more information.

Immediately report to your local police agency if you think you are a victim of crime.
To view other Fraud Alerts, go to www.weldda.com.