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AVOIDING IDENTITY THEFT

Introduction

Tax-related identity theft was actually down this year compared to 2015. The IRS has become so concerned about identity theft, they are taking extraordinary measures to combat it! The incidence of identity theft was nearly doubling each year. Access to information, credit through machines and anonymous sources have lead to this new financial problem. Often the effects of identity theft are devastating on the victim. The victim cannot get credit, will receive countless phone calls until late hours of the night, and will have their entire financial lives turned upside down for possible years. Identity theft is often frustrating and difficult to deal with. Not only can it cause years of frustration, it can cost valuable time and money. The best way to deal with identity theft is total preventative measures before it starts; there are also ways to fight back once it has begun. This article will discuss what all consumers, taxpayers and businesses should do to guard their financial lives and make sure they do not become victim to this ever growing trend.

Prevention

Prevention can best be described in four words: Protect, View, Hide, and Destroy. If you can remember

these four simple words, you can prevent identity theft from happening to you and your clients.

PROTECT your information and identity.

Identity thieves not only access your information through machines, they can also access your information through means as simple as your trash can or mailbox. Accordingly, make sure you prevent identity thieves from gathering or viewing your information before it even comes into your hands.



Obviously when it comes to your computer and telephone, be safe! Never give out your computer passwords, credit card numbers, social security number, address or any private information about yourself to an unsolicited email. Also of extreme importance, have your virus software updated frequently. One cyber security expert even recommends purchasing an inexpensive computer to do specifically bank transactions only and nothing else. There are so many viruses, the sad truth is virus software can only catch a percentage of them.

Currently there are millions of spam emails being sent out trying to get people to give out information to identity thieves. Often identity thieves will send emails offering great products at too-good-to-be-true prices just to get your credit card numbers.