

# Beware Identity Theft During Tax Season

(NAPSA)—According to a recent survey, many people engage in behavior online that could lead to identity theft during tax season, often due to some common misconceptions about the risks of preparing and submitting tax documents—but you may be able to avoid these behaviors.

Here's a look at the problems:

## Online Passwords

Most people are aware of the possible risks of sharing personal information during a transaction; 88 percent worry the organization they share personal information with could suffer a data breach, yet only 31 percent have a unique password for each site they use.

## Online Tax Submission

Respondents expressed mistrust of their tax preparers, with 53 percent concerned about identity theft.

Postal mail continued to be the most trustworthy of delivery options with 60 percent listing it as the most secure way to file their taxes. Nevertheless, 53 percent submit taxes online.

## IRS Contact Methods

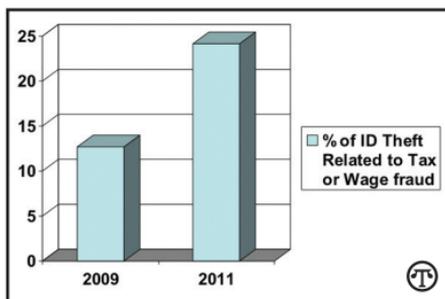
Too many respondents don't know how the IRS contacts tax payers: 40 believe it can be via e-mail, mail or phone. The IRS does not initiate contact with taxpayers through e-mail.

Here are a few tips to help you:

### When Preparing Your Return

**1. Be aware of suspicious e-mails and phone calls about your refund, filing or stimulus checks**—Check with the IRS at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) to learn how to spot scammers and thieves posing as the IRS and a list of known phishes.

**2. Be diligent choosing a tax preparer**—Work with a credible firm and be extra cautious



**Tax ID theft doubling in the past two years means a more complex crime to solve. Services like PrivacyGuard can help.**

about new or seasonal offices. Check the IRS website for advice on choosing a tax preparer.

**3. Secure your computer**—If you file electronically, be sure to install updated firewalls and anti-spyware protection.

## During and After Filing

**1. Mail securely**—If you file via mail, do so directly from the post office, not in an unlocked mailbox. Use first class mail with a tracking number.

**2. Safeguard sensitive information**—Keep paperwork in a safe location at home. Outside, make sure it's not visible.

**3. Microshred your documents**—Cross-cut shredders just don't "cut" it these days. A micro-cut shredder literally turns documents into dust.

## Get Identity Theft Protection

For extra identity protection, consider enrolling in an identity theft protection program such as PrivacyGuard. Its triple-bureau credit monitoring scans your credit files every day and quickly alerts you to any problems.

## Learn More

For more advice, visit [www.privacyguard.com](http://www.privacyguard.com) or call (800) 374-8273.