

Security Summit: Tax pros should encourage clients to obtain IP PINs to protect against tax-related identity theft

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WASHINGTON – Internal Revenue Service Security Summit partners today called on tax professionals to increase efforts to inform clients about the Identity Protection PIN Opt-In Program that can protect against tax-related identity theft.

The IRS, state tax agencies and the nation’s tax industry – working together as the [Security Summit](#) – need assistance from tax professionals to spread the word to clients that the IP PIN is now available to anyone who can verify their identity.

Sharing information about the IP PIN Opt-In Program is the second in a five-part weekly series sponsored by the Summit partners to highlight critical steps tax professionals can take to protect client data. This year’s theme “Boost Security Immunity: Fighting Against Identity Theft” is an effort to urge tax professionals to intensify efforts to secure their systems and protect client data during this pandemic and its aftermath.

“An Identity Protection PIN prevents someone else from filing a tax return using your Social Security number,” said Chuck Rettig, IRS commissioner. “We’ve now made the IP PIN available to anyone who can verify their identity. This is a free way for taxpayers to protect themselves, but we need the help of tax professionals to make sure more people know about it.”

The IRS created [Publication 5367](#), IP PIN Opt-In Program for Taxpayers, in English and Spanish, so that tax professionals could print and share the IP PIN information with clients. There are also special posters available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

For security reasons, tax professionals cannot obtain an IP PIN on behalf of clients. Taxpayers must obtain their own IP PIN.

Summit partners urged taxpayers and tax professionals to protect the IP PIN from identity thieves. Taxpayers should share their IP PIN only with their trusted tax prep provider. Tax professionals should never store clients’ IP PINs on computer systems. Also, the IRS will never call, email or text either taxpayers or tax preparers to request the IP PIN.

Tax professionals who experience a data theft can assist clients by urging them to quickly obtain an IP PIN. Even if a thief already has filed a fraudulent return, an IP PIN would still offer protections for later years and prevent taxpayers from being repeat victims of tax-related identity theft.

Here are a few things taxpayers should know about the IP PIN:

- It’s a six-digit number known only to the taxpayer and the IRS.
- The opt-in program is voluntary.
- The IP PIN should be entered onto the electronic tax return when prompted by the software product or onto a paper return next to the signature line.
- The IP PIN is valid for one calendar year; taxpayers must obtain a new IP PIN each year.
- Only dependents who can verify their identities may obtain an IP PIN.
- IP PIN users should never share their number with anyone but the IRS and their trusted tax preparation provider. The IRS will never call, email or text a request for the IP PIN.



Currently, taxpayers may obtain an IP PIN for 2021, which should be used when filing any federal tax returns during the year. New IP PINs will be available starting in January 2022.

To obtain an IP PIN, the best option is the [Get an IP PIN](#), the IRS online tool. Taxpayers must validate their identities through Secure Access authentication to access the tool and their IP PIN. Before attempting this rigorous process, see [Secure Access: How to Register for Certain Online Self-Help Tools](#). The tool is offline between November and January.

If you are unable to validate your identity online and if your income is \$72,000 or less, you may file [Form 15227, Application for an Identity Protection Personal Identification Number](#). The IRS will call the telephone number provided on Form 15227 to validate your identity. However, for security reasons, the IRS will assign an IP PIN for **the next filing season**. The IP PIN cannot be used for the current filing season.

Taxpayers who cannot validate their identities online, or on the phone with an IRS employee after submitting a Form 15227, or who are ineligible to file a Form 15227 may call the IRS to make an appointment at a Taxpayer Assistance Center. They will need to bring one picture identification document and another identification document to prove their identity. Once verified, the taxpayer will receive an IP PIN via U.S. Postal Service within three weeks.

The IP PIN process for confirmed victims of identity theft remains unchanged. These victims will automatically receive an IP PIN each year.

Additional resources

Tax professionals also can get help with security recommendations by reviewing the recently revised IRS [Publication 4557, Safeguarding Taxpayer Data](#), and [Small Business Information Security: The Fundamentals](#) by the National Institute of Standards and Technology. The IRS [Identity Theft Central](#) pages for tax pros, individuals and businesses have important details as well.

[Publication 5293, Data Security Resource Guide for Tax Professionals](#), provides a compilation of data theft information available on IRS.gov. Also, tax professionals should stay connected to the IRS through subscriptions to [e-News for Tax Professionals](#) and [Social Media](#).

For more information, see [Boost Security Immunity: Fighting Against Identity Theft](#).