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What You Need to Know to Protect Your Passwords

It's time to have a word about your password.

Many of us use the same sign-on and password over and over for our online accounts.

That's why phishing scams, which often seek password information, are so successful. Once a criminal has your password for one account, it's highly likely you've used the same sign-on information for other accounts.

The IRS, state revenue departments and the tax industry have teamed up to combat identity theft in the tax arena. Our theme: Taxes. Security. Together. Working in partnership with you, we can make a difference.

That's why we have all agreed to new stronger standards that you will see when you access your tax software products for 2016 and file your taxes. These include:

- A password that has eight or more characters, including upper case, and lower case letters as well as numbers and a special character.
- New features include a timed lockout and limits on unsuccessful log-in attempts.
- You must complete three security questions.
- Tax software partners must verify email addresses. In many cases, this means a PIN will be sent to your email or text that you must use to verify your address before you can proceed with your tax software.

These are just a few of the new protections that will be in place for the 2016 tax season to protect you from identity thieves. Most of the protections we are taking may not be visible to you, but they will add

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layers of protection nonetheless, adding new and stronger protections during tax time.

While we are taking these steps, it's a good time for you to think about the passwords you use for other accounts. You should always use strong passwords with a mix of letters, numbers and special characters. Do not use the same password for multiple accounts. The longer, the better. And change your passwords regularly.

We all have a role to play in fighting identity theft. Join with us to fight identity theft.

To learn additional steps you can take to protect your personal and financial data, visit [Taxes. Security. Together.](#) Also read [Publication 4524](#), Security Awareness for Taxpayers.

Each and every taxpayer has a set of fundamental rights they should be aware of when dealing with the IRS. These are your [Taxpayer Bill of Rights](#). Explore your rights and our obligations to protect them on IRS.gov.

Additional IRS Resources:

- [IRS Commissioner Koskinen's Statement on the Security Summit Group Public Awareness Campaign](#)
- www.irs.gov/identitytheft -- Identity Protection: Prevention, Detection and Victim Assistance
- [Taxpayer Guide to Identity Theft](#)
- [Identity Theft - Criminal Investigation](#)
- [IR-2015-129](#), IRS, States and Tax Industry Announce New Steps to Help Public to Protect Personal Tax Data
- [Fact Sheet 2015-23](#), IRS, States and Industry Partners Provide Update on Collaborative Fight Against Tax-Related Identity Theft
- [IRS and Partner Statements on the October 2015 Security Summit Meeting](#)

IRS YouTube Videos:

- *Taxes. Security. Together.* – [English](#)
- *Protect Yourself From Identity Theft* – [English](#) | [Spanish](#) | [ASL](#)

IRS Podcasts:

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