

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **Nessel Urges Consumers to Stay Informed on How to Avoid Identity Theft During Tax Season and Beyond**

**LANSING** – As tax season gets underway, Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel today kicked off Tax-related Identity Theft Awareness Week and her office will share information daily to raise awareness and motivate consumers to ensure their personal information is protected.

“Beginning today and through Friday, Jan. 31, my office will share tips to ensure Michiganders are equipped with the necessary tools to spot and stop thieves this tax season and beyond,” said Nessel. “Bad actors stop at nothing to get our personal information and it’s imperative that everyone knows the signs.”

[Tax-related Identity Theft](#) occurs when someone uses stolen personal information – including, but not limited to an individual’s Social Security number (SSN) – to file a phony tax return and claim the refund.

The IRS is often the first to inform a victim that their identity has been stolen. Steps to ensure consumers protect themselves and avoid being a victim include:

- Do not give out your SSN unless there’s a good reason, you’re confident you’re giving it to someone authorized to request this information, and you know how they will protect it.
- File your tax return as early as you can.
- If you file electronically, use a secure internet connection.
- If filing by mail, send your tax return directly from the post office.
- Research a tax preparer thoroughly before you hand over your personal information and never send your personal information in a text or email.
- Review the IRS’ [Taxpayer Guide to Identity Theft](#) and its [Identity Theft Information for Taxpayers](#).
- REMEMBER: The IRS will never call taxpayers with threats of lawsuits or arrests, nor will they ask you to wire money, pay with a gift card or prepaid debit card, or share your credit card information over the phone.

Nessel encourages those who find they are victims of any type of identity theft to follow the steps recommended by the Federal Trade Commission and [file a complaint](#). If an individual’s SSN is compromised and tax-related identity theft is suspected, the IRS recommends that consumers:

- Immediately contact the IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit at 800-908-4490;
- Respond immediately to any IRS notice;
- Complete IRS [Form 14039 Identity Theft Affidavit](#) (also available online through [IRS Publication 5027 Identity Theft Information for Taxpayers](#));

- Continue to pay your taxes and file your tax return, even if you must do so by paper; and
- Remember that even if a false refund is claimed and issued in your name, identity scammers do not actually steal “your” refund. If you are legally entitled to a tax refund, being a verified victim of tax-related identity theft will not change that. Your refund may be delayed, but you will, eventually, get your refund.

All of the above information and more will be accessible via a [special section on the AG’s homepage](#) throughout Tax-related Identity Theft Awareness Week. Follow the AG’s official [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) pages along with subscribing to the department’s consumer alerts to receive the most up-to-date to date consumer news.