



Informational Media Release

Certified Instructor

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **A Taxing Time for Identity Theft**

Happy days are here again –Tax Season! No one enjoys this period more than “ Identity Thieves”, and you need to protect yourself from their often clever schemes. Here are a few things to watch out for and what to do about them:

### **-PHISHING**

Phishing is a scam attempting to gain sensitive personal and financial information via e- mail. The e-mail is made to look like it came from the IRS. Information sought typically includes your social security, credit card , bank account and PIN numbers. Be advised, The IRS DOES NOT send unsolicited e- mails to taxpayers. In particular, they do not ask for sensitive personal and financial information by way of e- mail, fax, text, social media or telephone. So:

DO NOT respond with any information. Subject lines will often make it tempting to do so with such enticements as “ Your Refund ”, “Open immediately For Important Information” , “Inheritance Information”. Some form of intimidation may also be used such as “ Reply Immediately “ or “Penalties May Apply”.

DO NOT open any attachments or links contained in the e- mail. These will typically take you to a phony IRS looking web site where you are asked to fill in the “official form” providing your sensitive information. Also, by clicking an attachment or link, you may allow malware to be downloaded into your hard drive. Now the scammer may have the ability to capture all your passwords, bank information, etc.

Besides e-mail, the scammer may also attempt to get your information over the telephone, by text, fax or social media. Remember, the IRS DOES NOT request your Social Security Number, passwords, PIN

numbers, bank account information, etc. by these means. Do not be fooled by how “official” the letterhead , professional the site may look or how convincing the person sounds.

### **SOME DO'S**

Always communicate with the IRS through their official website (<http://www.irs.gov>) or by a telephone call you initiate.

Forward any suspicious e-mail or url address to the IRS mailbox, [phishing@irs.gov](mailto:phishing@irs.gov). You may also go to the IRS website and click on “Report Phishing” which can be found at the bottom of the page. Print the suspicious communication for your records and then delete it. DO NOT open or print any links or attachments associate with the suspicious e-mail.

If you believe you are or may become a victim of identity theft you should contact your local police department for assistance. Also, visit U.S. Federal Commission website, [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov) for additional guidance. If you utilize an accountant, immediately inform him of your concerns. He will be a great source of personal help and information.

Happy April 15<sup>th</sup>!

Rick Wehrheim is the Director of HomeGuard Associates located in Homosassa. HGA provides products, education, and training for groups and individuals concerning safety and security issues. Mr. Wehrheim is an NRA Certified Instructor and conducts their “Refuse to Be a Victim” seminars. He is also a Certified Instructor for Security Equipment Corporation’s “Civilian Safety Awareness Program”. Contact-(352) 503-6931, [homeguard@cox.net](mailto:homeguard@cox.net) Visit [www.homeguardassociates.com](http://www.homeguardassociates.com)