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## Wisconsin DOR joins tax industry partners to prevent scams

Need for vigilance stressed as identity theft attempts rise during holiday, tax seasons

Cyber Monday marked the start of the eighth National Tax Security Awareness Week.

The Wisconsin Department of Revenue joins its fellow state tax administrators, the IRS, Security Summit, and the nation's tax industry to equip taxpayers and tax professionals with essential tips to spoil scams and safeguard sensitive personal information.

"We have a multilayered approach at DOR to secure taxpayers' personal information," says DOR Secretary Peter Barca. "But securing personal identifiable information requires vigilance at every point along the way, so everyone from the tax professionals at DOR to tax practitioners and the taxpayers themselves need to take care to ensure their personal information is secure and safe from identity theft and other scam threats."

### Security Recommendations

The Security Summit issues a series of recommendations everyone should know and practice to enhance online security during the holiday and tax seasons:

- Choose websites with URLs beginning with "https" for secure communications.
- Look for the padlock icon in the browser window to ensure a secure connection.
- Avoid shopping on unsecured public Wi-Fi, especially in places like malls or restaurants.
- Regularly update security software on computers and tablets.
- Check and enhance the security of mobile phones using the Federal Communications Commission's Smartphone Security Checker.
- Extend protection to the devices of family members, including children and older adults.
- Use strong and unique passwords for online accounts.
- Employ multi-factor authentication whenever possible to add an extra layer of protection.

### Tips for tax professionals, businesses, taxpayers

In addition to individual precautions, the Security Summit provides guidance for tax pros, businesses, and taxpayers.

- Use separate computers, mobile devices, and email accounts for personal and business purposes.
- Do not send sensitive business information to personal email devices.
- Conduct business, including online banking, on dedicated business computers or devices.
- Avoid sharing USB drives between personal and business computers.
- Change passwords regularly and consider using a password management application.

### Identity Theft Schemes, Scam Awareness

The IRS highlights common identity theft schemes and scams taxpayers should remain vigilant against.

**Phishing Schemes:** Be cautious of emails and texts promising tax refunds or assistance with tax issues. Avoid clicking on links from questionable sources and report IRS-related scams to [phishing@irs.gov](mailto:phishing@irs.gov).

**Gift Card Scams:** Beware of gift card scams related to taxes, as scammers often advise payments using untraceable methods like gift cards, money transfers, or cryptocurrency.

