

Estabrook & Company and the IRS's Taxpayer Guide to Identity Theft

We understand that identity theft leading to fraudulent tax filings is an extremely frustrating process and we and the IRS take it very seriously.

Unfortunately there have been many of these cases across the country the past couple years due to the various wide spread data breaches. Fortunately, the IRS has implemented many helpful systems to get your case resolved and to prevent a fraudulent return from being filed again in the future. We at Estabrook and company are ready to guide you through the process as the limit and additional stress. Here are the next steps.

- 1) Your tax return **form 1040** will need to be filed by mail and will require your signature (Spouse as well if applicable) . Please come in and sign or mail back to our office as quickly as possible. We will often accompany this with the power of attorney **form 2848** so that we can follow up with the IRS on your behalf regularly.
- 2) We will need your signature on **form 14039** which our office will complete (Spouse as well). This is an identity theft affidavit form that makes the IRS aware of the issue and begins the process of them identifying the first return as fraud and accepting the correct one our office has prepared for you. It has unfortunately been a 10 to 16 week processing time as they are very meticulous in there research and find themselves overwhelmed by the increase number of these filings.
- 3) In addition the IRS recommends you take additional steps with agencies outside the IRS:
 - Report incidents of identity theft to the Federal Trade Commission at www.consumer.ftc.gov or the FTC Identity Theft hotline at 877-438-4338 or TTY 866-653-4261.
 - File a report with the local police.
 - Contact the fraud departments of the three major credit bureaus: °Equifax – www.equifax.com, 800-525-6285 °Experian – www.experian.com, 888-397-3742 °TransUnion – www.transunion.com, 800-680-7289
- 4) If you previously contacted the IRS and did not come to a resolution contact the identity Protection Specialized Unit at 1800-908-4490. There are teams to assist you.
- 5) Once your case has been resolved you will be issued your refund (if applicable). In future years you will be furnished with an **identity theft protection pin** that will be required in order to file.

Thank You and please don't hesitate to call with questions!

How to reduce your risk

- Don't routinely carry your Social Security card or any document with your SSN on it.
- Don't give a business your SSN just because they ask – only when absolutely necessary.
- Protect your personal financial information at home and on your computer.
- Check your credit report annually.
- Check your Social Security Administration earnings statement annually.
- Protect your personal computers by using firewalls, anti-spam/virus software, update security patches and change passwords for Internet accounts.
- Don't give personal information over the phone, through the mail or the Internet unless you have either initiated the contact or are sure you know who is asking.

The IRS does not initiate contact with taxpayers by email to request personal or financial information. This includes any type of electronic communication, such as text messages and social media channels.