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State of New Jersey Department of the Treasury

Christie Administration Advises Taxpayers to Increase Awareness of Identity Theft Schemes as Tax Filing Season Concludes

TRENTON – The New Jersey State Division of Taxation is warning taxpayers to be wary of identity thieves who are trying to steal refunds. Scammers commit refund fraud by filing fraudulent refund claims using another person’s stolen identifying information. The beginning and immediate conclusion of tax season, which ends April 15, are the most active time periods for tax return identity theft.

Recently, the IRS announced that it conducted a massive national sweep targeting identity theft suspects in 32 states, which led to 734 enforcement actions in January, including indictments, complaints and arrests.

In New Jersey, some taxpayers will attempt to file their return only to find that a refund has been issued to someone else. Sometimes, identity thieves will file a fraudulent return using an innocent taxpayer’s identity in multiple states. Variations of the scam have been going on for several years, inconveniencing taxpayers by causing delays in obtaining refunds until their identity can be verified.

Other methods identity thieves use include spoofing phone numbers and calling from out of state or overseas and representing themselves as investigators, auditors or collection agents and then demanding payment for “taxes owed.”

“We get a lot of false returns, and we have stopped tens of millions of dollars from going to the wrong people over the past several years,” said Michael J. Bryan, Director of the Division of Taxation. “We refer some of the perpetrators to our Criminal Investigations Unit, which evaluates them based on information that we have.”

“The Division uses withholding information from employers, the State Department of Labor and Workforce Development, IRS and internal records to validate the data on submitted returns and ensure refunds go to the correct taxpayers,” Bryan said

Taxpayers can protect themselves, too. If their wallet has been stolen or credit card information has been hacked, they should contact the Division immediately so it can monitor their account for any fraudulent activity.

Taxpayers who believe someone has stolen is trying to steal their identity should contact the Division’s Customer Service Center at (609) 292-6400.

For more information, click on this link: http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/identity_theft.shtml

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