
From: Attorney General Ellen F. Rosenblum <attorneygeneral@doj.state.or.us>
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To:
Subject: Hackers Target IRS Website -- 4 Tips to Keep You Safe



Oregon Department of Justice
FINANCIAL FRAUD/CONSUMER PROTECTION SECTION

SCAM ALERT

Hackers Target IRS Website -- 4 Tips to Keep You Safe

A "sophisticated" organized crime group has stolen the personal financial information of more than 104,000 taxpayers directly from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) website. According to the agency, the IRS recently identified a startling 200,000 attempts from the group to steal personal data.

The information that these criminals used to access the "Get Transcript" app from the IRS, includes Social Security numbers, phone number and addresses, and could easily lead to more targeted schemes. The agency says it will notify affected taxpayers about the incident, and provide free credit monitoring to those whose information was accessed.



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The plot to steal this information and hijack nearly \$50 million in refunds not only reveals a previous security breach, but exposes a wider new fraud that could cost Oregonians. The breach also highlights what could happen in the future if this personal information is sold on the "black market". Fraudsters who purchase this personal information could open bank accounts, credit lines and steal tax refunds in the future.

"I encourage all Oregonians to be alert for scams aimed at duping taxpayers into handing millions of dollars over to criminals like those who pose as IRS employees," said Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum. "If you believe you have been the victim of an IRS-related scam, please call the Oregon Department of Justice's consumer hotline, and we will help you find resources."

Attorney General Rosenblum has several tips to help protect your personal information and detect scams:

- 1. Use Multifactor Authentication:** If this service is offered to you always turn it on. Usually it involves sending you a text with an additional code to enter when logging in.
- 2. Change Your Passwords:** It is always a good idea to change your passwords a couple of times a year. Make sure these passwords are varied and unique, with capitals, numbers and special characters.
- 3. Don't Rely on Security Questions:** Websites often use security questions such as "What is your mother's maiden name?" or "What high school did you go to?" to recover a user's account if the password is forgotten. Unfortunately, scammers can often guess the answers to these questions or find them online. Pick a question that only you know the answer to, or answer the question with an alternate password.

4. Monitor Your Credit: There are a number of free credit monitoring services out there that can help you keep track of your credit. It is best to check your credit often and immediately report any inconsistencies. Visit www.annualcreditreport.com or call 1-877-322-8228 to order a free credit report and review it for errors.

If you have fallen victim to an IRS-related scam, file a complaint with the Oregon Department of Justice online at www.oregonconsumer.gov or by phone at (877) 877-9392.



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