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Department of Revenue Encourages Montanans to Guard Against Identity Theft During Tax Season

HELENA – As tax season begins, there is no better time for Montana’s taxpayers to be mindful of the threat of identity theft. The Montana Department of Revenue would like to remind taxpayers of ways they can avoid the threat.

“The Department of Revenue takes identity theft extremely seriously,” says Revenue Director Mike Kadas, “and we’re doing all we can to prevent Montana’s taxpayers from becoming victims. But we need taxpayers to be careful as well and help us by doing all they can to make sure their sensitive tax information isn’t compromised.”

Here are some ways you can minimize the threat of identity theft:

- Use a secure internet connection if you file your taxes electronically, or mail your tax return directly from the post office if you file by paper.
- Protect your personal computer by using firewalls and anti-spam/virus software.
- Shred copies of your tax return, drafts, or calculation sheets you no longer need.
- Respond to all mail from the Montana Department of Revenue and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as soon as possible.
- Know that the department and the IRS will not contact you by email, text message, or social media. If the IRS needs information, they will contact you by mail. The department will contact you by mail or phone.
- Don’t give out your Social Security number on the phone, through the mail, or on the internet unless you know for certain who you are giving the number to.
- If your Social Security number has been compromised, contact the IRS ID Theft Protection Specialized Unit at 1-800-908-4490.
- Research a tax preparer thoroughly before you hand over personal information.
- Check your credit report at least once a year to make sure no other accounts have been opened in your name.
- Consider setting up a security freeze on your credit information so no one can access it without your permission. Contact the three credit bureaus (Equifax, Experian, TransUnion) to request a security freeze.

The Department of Revenue takes its own precautions to guard against identify theft. “The protection of your identity is very important to us. We work closely with the IRS and other states on fraud protection activities, while increasing our efforts internally to identify potentially fraudulent tax returns,” says Margaret Kauska, the Department of Revenue’s Chief Security Officer.

For more information about guarding against identity theft and what to do if you think you’re a victim, go to the Department of Justice’s identity theft website at dojmt.gov/consumer/for-consumers/identity-theft/.