



## Tax Season Cyber Tips

### How to protect your company during tax season

- **Be prepared for phishing scams.** Hackers and cyber criminals know you'll be looking for ways to quickly prepare for tax season. Don't be fooled by emails that try to entice you to click on a link or download malicious content. If an offer looks promising, research the company, their competitors and verify their site is legitimate. If doesn't hurt to call them before you engage online.
- **Encrypt sensitive documents before you sending them to your accountant.** If the accountant doesn't accept encrypted documents, then don't send them online. Make copies and deliver them in person. Use only https websites for transmitting sensitive information.
- **Create a technology checklist.** Since you will be reviewing expenses for the past year, now is a great time to create a list of your technology that should be protected, including copiers, printers, software services, websites, social networks and point of sale devices. Include detailed information about the service, age and security parameters. Find a checklist [here](#).
- **Conduct a data backup.** When is the last time you backed up your critical business data? Review your critical data and take steps to back it up with an encrypted service provider.
- **Schedule a cyber awareness day.** Has the CEO taken the time to talk to employees about cybersecurity? Schedule a monthly meeting to have the business owner talk about the importance of protecting the business from scams. Many scams target employees, so have them [learn how to protect](#) your company.
- **Learn the signs of identity theft.** In order to protect your identity and prevent fraudulent returns, learn the signs. Identity thieves often use letters to obtain sensitive information to conduct further attacks. For instance, you or your accountant might attempt to file your tax return, but it is rejected, or you may receive a tax transcript by mail that you didn't request. The IRS has several good references to protect against identity theft. If you believe you've been a victim of identity theft, contact ITRC at their [website](#).
- **Shred.** Shred confidential business data. Make sure your employees also learn to shred sensitive information rather than simply throwing it away.
- **Plan to protect.** As you are reviewing your expenses from last year, assess whether your company is adequately protected. An industry best practice is to spend between 5-8% of your IT budget on IT security.
- **Assess your risks.** Assess the risks to tax information to include your operations, physical environment, computer systems and employees. Make a list of all locations where you keep sensitive business data and implement controls to protect access.
- **Join the NCSS.** Become a member of [The National Cybersecurity Society](#) today and learn more about how to protect your business from a cyber attack.

