

# FRAUD ALERT!

## Avoid Tax Fraud

The information in your return contains everything that an unscrupulous third party needs to steal your identity, file tax returns on your behalf, steal your refund, and more. There are many scams associated with filing your taxes. Below are a few tips to help avoid some of the more common scams:

- **Be realistic.** If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. From companies that promise to file your taxes for free, to sites that claim you don't have to pay tax because it's unconstitutional--keep an eye out for deliberately misleading statements.
- **Be informed.** Before you file your taxes, spend a little time at the web site for the IRS.
- **Never respond to unsolicited e-mail offers or requests for information.** The IRS does not use e-mail to communicate any personal information, and legitimate tax-preparation companies should not approach you with unsolicited e-mail. These messages are most likely identity-theft phishing scams.
- **Choose your tax-preparer or tax preparation software with care.** Ask people you trust recommendations. For more information about e-file partners and tax software, visit the IRS e-file Partners for Taxpayers website page.

The IRS warns taxpayers to avoid this common scheme:

**Return Preparer Fraud:** Dishonest return preparers can cause many headaches for taxpayers who fall victim to their schemes. Such preparers make their money by skimming a portion of their clients' refunds and charging inflated fees for return preparation services. They attract new clients by promising large refunds. Some preparers promote filing fraudulent claims for refunds on items such as fuel tax credits to recover taxes paid in prior years. Taxpayers should choose carefully when hiring a tax preparer. As the old saying goes, "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is." Remember that no matter who prepares the return, the taxpayer is ultimately responsible for its accuracy. In 2006, 109 tax return preparers were convicted of tax crimes and sentenced to an average of 18 months in prison.

- If you think there is another person using your Social Security number to file income taxes, call the Social Security Administration at (800) 772-1213.
- If you suspect a company or an individual of committing tax fraud or not obeying tax laws, call the IRS at (800) 829-0433.

**For more information or to report a scam- contact any one of the Task Force members:**

**BUCKS COUNTY CRIMES AGAINST OLDER ADULTS TASK FORCE-  
FIGHTING ABUSE, NEGLECT, AND EXPLOITATION OF OLDER ADULTS IN BUCKS COUNTY**

**Bucks County District Attorney's Office**  
215-348-6344  
**Bucks County Consumer Protection**  
215-348-6060  
**Bucks County Register of Wills**  
215-348-6265

**Bucks County Area Agency on Aging**  
215-348-0510  
**Network of Victim Assistance**  
1-800-675-6900  
**Bucks County Coroner**  
215-348-3852