

Prevent Identity Theft by Filing Your Tax Return Early

You may not start thinking about filing your tax return until close to the April deadline. You might even choose to file for an extension so you don't have to send your return to the IRS until October. Not many people are aware of is that **filing your tax return as early as possible could protect you from tax identity theft.**

1) Why Early Filing Helps

In an increasingly common scam, thieves use victims' personal information to file fraudulent tax returns electronically and claim refunds. This is usually done early in the tax filing season. When the real taxpayers file, they get notified that they are attempting to file duplicate returns.

A victim typically discovers the fraud after he or she files a tax return and is informed by the IRS that the return has been rejected because one with the same Social Security number has already been filed for the same tax year. The IRS then must determine who the legitimate taxpayer is.

Tax identity theft can cause major headaches to straighten out and significantly delay legitimate refunds. But if you file first, it will be the tax return filed by a potential thief that will be rejected - not yours.

2) Important Dates

- **January 23:** IRS will begin accepting 2016 returns.
- **January 31:** The deadline for employers to issue 2016 W-2s to employees and, generally, for businesses to issue 1099s to recipients of any 2016 interest, dividend or reportable miscellaneous income payments.
- **April 18:** Tax return filing deadline.

3) Delays for Some Refunds

The IRS reminded taxpayers claiming the earned income tax credit or the additional child tax credit to expect a longer wait for their refunds. A law passed in 2015 requires the IRS to hold refunds on tax returns claiming these credits until at least February 15.

If you will be getting a refund, an added bonus of filing early is that you will be able to enjoy your refund sooner!



If you have any questions need tips for filing your tax return early, please contact **Sherman Leong, Tax Manager** at sleong@lvhj.com or 415-905-5432.

[Click here to read more about Sherman Leong.](#)

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