



*Tony Evers*  
Governor

*Peter W. Barca*  
Secretary of Revenue

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CONTACT: Patty Mayers, Communications Director  
608.266.2300 or [DORCommunications@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DORCommunications@wisconsin.gov)

## **Fraud and Identity Theft Protection Efforts Pay Off** *Anti-Fraud Initiatives Save Taxpayers \$55 Million*

More than \$55 million in fraudulent and erroneous refunds and credits were blocked last tax season thanks in part to the [Wisconsin Department of Revenue's use of identity verification tools](#).

"Claim processing systems continue to improve, better detecting fraud, errors and discrepancies leading to bad refunds," said Peter Barca, Wisconsin Department of Revenue Secretary. "Training and technology go hand-in-hand in our fight against fraud."

"We carefully review filed tax returns to protect taxpayers, since cybercriminals and identity thieves continue to find new ways to commit fraud," Secretary Barca said. "Our systems are very secure, but when criminals steal someone's personal information from other sources, they may use it to file a fraudulent tax return, so we're mindful of that."

DOR is highlighting IRS National Tax Security Awareness Week noting that it is also a very busy online shopping week. Additionally, a new tax season kicks off next month. DOR wants shoppers to be cautious and protect themselves from cybercriminals looking to steal personal information that could help them file fraudulent tax returns.

A few highlights:

- Always use security software with firewall and anti-virus protections. Make sure the security software is always turned on and can automatically update. Encrypt sensitive files such as tax records you store on your computer. Use strong, unique passwords for each account.
- Learn to recognize and avoid phishing emails, threatening calls and texts from thieves posing as legitimate organizations such as your bank, credit card company and even the IRS. Do not click on links or download attachments from unknown or suspicious emails.
- Protect your personal data. Don't routinely carry your Social Security card, and make sure your tax records are secure. Shop at reputable online retailers. Treat your personal information like you do your cash; don't leave it lying around.

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