



Rhode Island Department of Revenue

Division of Taxation

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SECURITY SUMMIT

ADVISORY FOR TAX PROFESSIONALS
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Security Summit urges tax preparers to protect client data

Take time to review safeguards, whether working in office or remotely amid pandemic

PROVIDENCE — The Rhode Island Division of Taxation, the Internal Revenue Service, and other partners in the Security Summit remind tax professionals to review critical security steps to ensure that they are fully protecting client data whether working in the office or at a remote location – especially because cybercriminals are active amid the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19).



Many tax professionals have expanded telework options this year as firms, like other businesses, work to keep personnel safe, practice recommended safety guidelines, and use technology to virtually serve their clients.

During this period, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency urges organizations to maintain a heightened state of alert as cybercriminals seek to exploit them amid the pandemic.

To assist tax professionals with the security basics, the IRS, the Rhode Island Division of Taxation, other states' tax agencies, and the nation's tax industry have launched a weekly series called "Working Virtually: Protecting Tax Data at Home and at Work". The series is designed to help practitioners assess their home and office data security. The first recommendation covers the "Security Six" – basic steps that should be taken for every work location.

"The Security Summit partners urge tax professionals to take time this summer to give their data safeguards a thorough review and ensure that these protections are in place whether they work from home or the office," said IRS Commissioner Chuck Rettig.

Although the Security Summit – a partnership between the IRS, states and the private-sector tax community – is making major progress against tax-related identity theft, cybercriminals continue to evolve, said Rhode Island Tax Administrator Neena Savage, who oversees the Division of Taxation.

Criminals are aware that tax practitioners and their systems may be more vulnerable this year during the pandemic, especially if they are working remotely. The Security Summit urges tax professionals to update their anti-virus software, maintain firewalls, use two-factor authentication, back up critical files, use drive encryption, and use a virtual private network. For more information, use the following link: <https://go.usa.gov/xf8yN>.

The Rhode Island Division of Taxation office is at One Capitol Hill in Providence, R.I., diagonally across from the Smith Street entrance of the State House, and is open to the public 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. business days. To learn more, see the agency's website: www.tax.ri.gov.