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Media Relations Office | Washington, D.C. | Media Contact: 202.317.4000
www.IRS.gov/newsroom | Public Contact: 800.829.1040

IRS, States, Industry Launch Second Year of Public Awareness Campaign: "Taxes. Security. Together."

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WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service and its Security Summit partners today began the second year of their "Taxes. Security. Together." campaign aimed at encouraging taxpayers to take stronger measures to protect their financial and tax data.

The campaign features a series of security awareness tax tips, a round-up of suggestions at the Taxes. Security. Together. web page and a one-page Publication 4524, Security Awareness for Taxpayers.

"These are common sense tips to help taxpayers ensure the security of their information," said IRS Commissioner John Koskinen. "The Security Summit partnership between the IRS, states and industry has made great strides but we need taxpayers to ensure their information is secure as well."

The IRS, state tax agencies and the tax community came together in 2015 to combat tax-related identity theft as a coordinated partnership. But they immediately saw that one partner was missing: taxpayers.

The IRS and its partners need the help of all taxpayers. The Security Summit also needs the help of tax preparers and businesses to share information and help educate clients and employees about security measures. For example:

- 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 passwords.

- 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. Treat your personal information like you do your cash; don't leave it lying around.