



## **PRESS RELEASE**

For Immediate Distribution

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### **NH Department of Revenue Encourages Heightened Tax Security Awareness Amid Pandemic**

*National Tax Security Awareness Week offers tips for taxpayers to protect against identity theft*

**Concord, NH** – During the IRS’ Annual National Tax Security Awareness Week, which runs from November 30 to December 4, the [New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration](#) (NHDRA) is sharing tips to help New Hampshire residents protect themselves against tax-related identity theft and fraud. With an increase in taxpayers and tax preparers working from home, identity thieves have increased scam efforts during the pandemic.

“In the thick of holiday shopping, the approaching tax season, and as people across the state continue to work remotely, we encourage New Hampshire residents to instill an amplified sense of awareness around potential scams,” said NHDRA Commissioner Lindsey Stepp. “There has undeniably been heightened fraud activity during the pandemic, especially surrounding unemployment and other state benefits. NHDRA even had our telephone number ‘spoofed’ to appear as if we were calling people, when in reality, it was a fraudster.”

Taxpayers can ensure that contact from NHDRA is legitimate by understanding a typical interaction with NHDRA. In almost all circumstances, the first attempt the NHDRA will make to contact a taxpayer is in writing. For example, before telephone collection attempts occur, the taxpayer will be mailed at least one tax notice. Before an audit commences, the auditor assigned to the audit will mail a letter initiating the audit. If a taxpayer is contacted by telephone first, it is likely because the taxpayer called and left a message or has initiated another inquiry with the NHDRA, such as a request for a Meals & Rentals license or a certificate of good standing. Additionally, for taxpayers with online Granite Tax Connect (GTC) accounts, if NHDRA makes an attempt to collect money, the amounts owed will be reflected in the taxpayer’s GTC account, which the taxpayer can confirm by logging in.

If a taxpayer is concerned about the legitimacy of a call they have received purporting to be from the NHDRA, the taxpayer can take the caller's information and then hang up and call the NHDRA's Call Center at (603) 230-5000 to confirm the identity of the caller and the legitimacy of the telephone contact.

The IRS, state tax agencies and the nation's tax industry – working together as the Security Summit – have provided tips on basic safeguards everyone should take:

- Use security software for computers and mobile phones, and keep it updated.
- Ensure that purchased anti-virus software has a feature to stop malware, and that there is a firewall that can prevent intrusions.
- Phishing scams, such as imposter emails, calls and texts, are the primary way thieves steal personal data. Do not open links or attachments on suspicious emails. This year, fraud scams related to COVID-19 and the Economic Impact Payment are common.
- Use strong and unique passwords for online accounts. Use a phrase or series of words that can be easily remembered or use a password manager.
- Use multi-factor authentication whenever possible. Many email providers and social media sites offer this feature. It helps prevent thieves from easily hacking accounts.
- Shop at sites where the web address begins with "https." The "s" is for "secure" communications over the computer network. Also, look for the "padlock" icon in the browser window.
- Do not shop on unsecured public Wi-Fi in places like a mall. Remember, thieves can eavesdrop.
- Secure at-home Wi-Fi with a password. With more homes connected to the web, secured systems become more important, from wireless printers, wireless door locks to wireless thermometers. These can be access points for identity thieves.
- Back up files on computers and mobile phones. A cloud service or an external hard drive can be used to copy information from computers or phones, providing an important place to recover financial or tax data.
- Working from home? Consider creating a virtual private network (VPN) to securely connect to your workplace.
- Taxpayers should note that the IRS will not call, text or email about Economic Impact Payments or tax refunds, nor will it call with threats of jail or lawsuits over unpaid taxes. Those are scams.

The IRS, state tax agencies, and the private sector tax industry, including tax professionals, work in partnership as the Security Summit to help protect taxpayers from identity theft and refund fraud. For more details, tips and resources, visit [www.irs.gov/securitysummit](http://www.irs.gov/securitysummit).

### **About the New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration**

The New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration (NHDRA) is responsible for fairly and efficiently administering the tax laws of the State of New Hampshire. NHDRA collects approximately 80% of New Hampshire's general taxes. During Fiscal Year 2020, NHDRA collected \$1.80 billion in taxes, most of which went to the New Hampshire General Fund and Education Trust Fund. NHDRA also provides assistance to municipalities in budgeting, finance and real estate appraisal.

NHDRA administers and collects the following taxes at the state level: Business Enterprise Tax, Business Profits Tax, Communications Services Tax, Interest and Dividends Tax, Meals and Rooms Tax, Medicaid Enhancement Tax, Nursing Facility Quality Assessment, Tobacco Tax, Taxation of Railroads, Utility Property Tax, Real Estate Transfer Tax; and the following taxes at the local level: Property Tax, Excavation Tax, Timber Tax. To learn more about NHDRA, please visit [www.revenue.nh.gov](http://www.revenue.nh.gov).

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