



HANOVER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
NEWS RELEASE
COLONEL DAVID R. HINES, SHERIFF

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HCSO Reminds Citizens to Protect Themselves Against Identity Theft

Hanover, VA – As tax season approaches, the Hanover County Sheriff's Office would like to remind citizens to protect themselves against identity theft. Identity theft is rapidly becoming one of the most widespread crimes, affecting millions of new victims each year. Tax-related identity theft is the taking of a victim's identity, including their Social Security number, and filing a fraudulent tax return. Victims are often unaware that this has occurred until they file their return and discover that a return has already been filed under their Social Security number.

How can you reduce your risk?

- Be aware of scams and "phishing" schemes. Do not give out personal information over the phone, through the mail, or over the Internet unless you have initiated the contact. The Sheriff's Office reminds citizens that the IRS will not call you and demand immediate payment. The IRS will not call about taxes you owe without first mailing you a bill.
- Protect your personal data. Use security software with firewall and anti-virus protection. Use strong passwords. Shred all documents that contain personal information.
- Do not click on links or download attachments from unknown or suspicious emails.
- Monitor your credit report. Federal law requires that each of the three credit bureaus (Equifax, Experian and Trans Union) provide one free credit report per year to individuals upon request. You may order your free credit report from each of the three bureaus at the Annual Credit Report Web site (www.annualcreditreport.com).

If you are a victim of tax-related identity theft:

- Contact the IRS immediately at 800-908-4490. The IRS will advise you to file a report with your local law enforcement agency.
- Contact the Hanover County Sheriff's Office non-emergency line at 804-365-6140 to file a report.
- File a complaint with the Federal Trades Commission at identitytheft.gov.
- Contact one of the three major credit bureaus to place a "fraud alert" on your credit records:
 - www.Equifax.com 1-888-766-0008
 - www.Experian.com 1-888-397-3742

"CONTINUING TO BE A PART OF, NOT APART FROM, THE COMMUNITY"



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- www.TransUnion.com 1-800-680-7289
- Close any financial or credit accounts opened by identity thieves.
- Complete IRS Form 14039, Identity Theft Affidavit, if your e-file return rejects because of a duplicate filing under your SSN.

The Hanover County Sheriff's Office Financial Crimes Victim Advocate will contact victims and assist them in navigating the issues related to financial victimization, including completing necessary forms, repairing their credit and steps to take to prevent future financial crimes. If you have been a victim of tax-related identity theft, contact the Hanover County Sheriff's Office at 804-365-6140.

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