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OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

CA: Tips to Avoid Tax Scams and Identity Theft



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody is issuing a Consumer Alert ahead of the federal tax filing deadline to help Floridians avoid common tax scams. From now through the April 15 filing deadline, identity thieves and scammers will be ramping up efforts to steal taxpayers returns and sensitive identification information.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “Tax season is a busy time for identity thieves and scammers as they look for ways to steal returns and the identities of taxpayers. When filing, Floridians should take precautions to protect their identities and sensitive tax-filing information to avoid falling victim to these fraudsters, and if anyone encounters a scam they should immediately report it to our office.”

The following are tips to help taxpayers avoid identity theft and scams when preparing and filing taxes:

· Get recommendations and research a tax preparer thoroughly before providing personal information;

· Use a secure internet connection when filing electronically. Do not use unsecure, publicly available Wi-Fi hotspots;

· Mail tax returns directly from the post office, not from home;

· After filing, shred any unneeded tax receipts or filing documents before disposal;

· Know that the IRS will never initiate contact by email, phone, text or social media. If the IRS needs information, it will first contact by mail;

· Do not give out Social Security numbers unless absolutely necessary; and

· If a Social Security number is compromised contact the IRS ID Theft Protection Specialized Unit at 1(800) 908-4490;

If anyone believes they are a victim of a tax scam, identity theft or any other fraud, they can report the incident to the Florida Attorney General's Office by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or visiting MyFloridaLegal.com.

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The Florida Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division issues Consumer Alerts to inform Floridians of emerging scams, new methods used to commit fraud, increased reports of common scams, or any other deceptive practice. Consumer Alerts are designed to notify Floridians about scams and available refunds in an effort to prevent financial losses or other harm caused by deceptive practices. Anyone encountering a scam should report the incident to the Florida Attorney General's Office by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or visiting MyFloridaLegal.com.