Ohio | Department of Taxation

Joseph W. Testa, Tax Commissioner

SAFEGUARDING TAXPAYER REFUNDS IN 2015

In order to better protect Ohio taxpayers and prevent tax fraud, the Ohio Department of Taxation (ODT) is implementing additional safeguards that will inevitably cause some refunds to be delayed this upcoming income tax filing season.

These steps are being taken to further bolster defenses in anticipation of the continuing increase in attempted tax fraud involving identity theft. Last year, ODT intercepted an unprecedented number of fraudulent income tax returns seeking to steal refunds totaling more than $250 million. In previous years, attempted tax fraud averaged about $10 million.

To detect and counter refund fraud related to ID theft, an additional up-front filter will now be applied to all tax refund requests to analyze the demographic information reported on a return. This analysis will then assign a "probability of fraud" factor that will determine how the return is then further processed by ODT.

If a return is pulled for review, ODT's additional security measures will require some taxpayers to successfully complete an Identification Confirmation Quiz, before the return will continue to be processed. If a taxpayer's return is selected for identity confirmation they will receive a letter from ODT directing them to our website (www.tax.ohio.gov). The website will provide access to the quiz, detailed instructions on how to complete it, and frequently asked questions for reference. Taxpayers without Internet access will be directed to call ODT at **1-855-855-7579**, for assistance with completing the quiz.

The additional screening and security measures will unfortunately slow the processing of electronic and paper returns, and the issuance of refunds. Electronic returns requesting a refund may take up to 15 days to be direct deposited this year, and paper returns could take up to 30 days for a physical check to be mailed out.

ODT is committed to aggressively fighting ID theft and tax fraud. If you are a tax professional, we welcome your assistance in advising your clients and the taxpaying public about these changes for the upcoming filing season. We share a common goal: to continue to protect Ohioans and Ohio from this fraudulent activity. Thank you for your time and understanding.