

February 20, 2009

To: CyberTax members

From: Veronica Coates, National Technology Manager, AARP Tax-Aide

Subject: CyberTax 2009-016: ***Top 10 Security and Confidentiality Reminders***

Top 10 Security and Confidentiality Reminders

Protecting the confidentiality and security of taxpayer data has always been a priority focus for this program and you the volunteers. There are many steps we can take to help ensure that we protect taxpayer information. This document is intended to provide you with some reminders and highlights of the AARP Tax-Aide required security controls that will help preserve the confidentiality and privacy of taxpayer data. Leaders must ensure that all volunteers understand these responsibilities and abide by them.

1. Per Internal Revenue Code 7216: Aggregate/summary taxpayer data can only be shared IF that data covers 25 or more returns. The aggregate data to which we refer must be summary for 25 returns or more in categories like total EITC dollars, total Child Tax Credit dollars, etc. Total returns processed are always OK to share as that number is a production count unrelated to any taxpayer data.
2. Taxpayer data should not be sent via regular e-mail unless it is securely encrypted. Taxpayer data can, of course, be sent through TaxWise since these communications are already in encrypted form.
3. Appropriate steps to secure taxpayer data must be taken at all times. Any piece of equipment, computer (personally owned or site sponsor owned) and/or any external memory devices, such as a flash drive, on which taxpayer data resides **must** be encrypted. This applies to **all** computers, including personally owned and site-sponsor-owned computers. Slave computers on a server that never have the taxpayer information, or a computer running *TaxWise* from a removable device that is encrypted do not require encryption software.
4. Use the AARP Tax-Aide provided anti-virus and firewall software program to protect all AARP purchased and donated computers and contents from viruses and hackers. If a personal computer is being used for tax preparation, AVG or other anti-virus and firewall software must be installed.
5. AARP Tax-Aide prohibits wireless networking and the use of wireless to conduct any AARP Tax-Aide business, except for printer sharing only. Also, please remember the IRS does not currently approve the use of

wireless networking, and CCH *TaxWise* does not support *TaxWise* in a wireless environment.

6. During the season, the operating system of any computer containing taxpayer data ***must*** be password-protected. Please do not share your passwords with non AARP Tax-Aide volunteers.
7. If you must have a written password reminder, keep it away from the computer, carrying case, or anything tax related and in a location that is not visible to others (consider putting it in your wallet or billfold, an item that we also take care to protect). **At no time should a password be taped or stuck to a computer.**
8. Exit *TaxWise* (this applies to IRS, AARP Tax-Aide, and personal computers) and close the encryption software (AARP Tax-Aide computers) before leaving your computer for a break, turning off your computer, or closing the lid on a laptop when working with taxpayer's data.. Closing the lid on a laptop may only put the computer in a state of "standby" or "hibernation", which means *TaxWise* is still open and the data is vulnerable.
9. Paper forms (W2s, 1099, 8879s, etc.) are very vulnerable for theft due to exposed social security numbers and other taxpayer data which is unable to be encrypted. Forms 8879 must be mailed only from locked and secure mailboxes. ***All*** forms and reports with taxpayer data ***must*** be safeguarded from being lost or stolen, particularly at sites. They should be stored in envelopes and folders out of view during site hours, and when the site is closed care should be taken to make sure they are locked away and secured.
10. In the event that you believe taxpayer data has been compromised or equipment (including flash drives) with taxpayer data on it has been stolen, please report it immediately.
 - ❖ **1-800-424-2277**, ext 36021 or ext 36027 (during business hours), or 1-202-434-6021/6027 (after hours), ***must*** be called immediately (within 24 hours) if ***ANY*** computer containing taxpayer data is lost or stolen.
 - ❖ If the loss is the result of theft, call the local police to report the theft as soon as you realize what has happened.
 - ❖ Inform your volunteer supervisor about the situation.

If you have any questions about data security in the AARP Tax-Aide program, please see a volunteer leader at your site or go to www.aarp.org/tavolunteers and see the General Security document under Security & Confidentiality for additional guidance. If you still need additional information please send email to

taxaidetech@aarp.org, include your position, state or split-state and phone number in the email.

*** Please note some of the information contained in this document may have been updated since the AARP Tax-Aide manuals were sent out. ***

**CyberTax messages will be available weekly on the Extranet (<http://www.aarp.org/tavolunteers>) in the "General Program Communication" section.

*** No attachment intended

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