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# International Association of Chiefs of Police and Bank of America Offer Tax Time Tips to Prevent Identity Crime

Prevention Information Part of Partnership and [www.IDSafety.org](http://www.IDSafety.org)

**Alexandria, Va., and Charlotte, N.C.** – Along with paperwork and frustration, tax season brings opportunities for identity criminals. To help taxpayers protect their important personal information from theft or compromise, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and Bank of America are offering tax time tips on [www.IDSafety.org](http://www.IDSafety.org) [www.IDSafety.org](http://www.IDSafety.org) their partnership Web site.

“At a time when personal information is increasingly free flowing online and in the mail, identity criminals have more chances to help themselves,” said Joseph Carter, Chief of the MBTA Transit Police Department and President of the IACP. “We hope that these common sense tips will thwart criminals and help everyone safeguard their personal information this tax season.”

“While we encourage our customers to be vigilant year-round, tax time presents a good opportunity to renew your focus on protecting your personal information and preventing identity crime,” said Ron Green, Senior Vice President, Information Security, Bank of America. “Along with our partners in IACP, Bank of America reminds consumers to be especially careful handling tax-related documents.”

The IACP/Bank of America team has several tax season precautions to help prevent identity crime:

- **Be extra wary of “phishing”**

Phishing is the act of sending an e-mail that falsely claims to be from an established legitimate enterprise to scam the recipient into surrendering private information, either directly by reply or by sending the recipient to a bogus Web site that looks like the site of the established legal enterprise. The scammer then uses that information for identity crime. Tax time is ripe for such criminal activity. For more information about what to do if you suspect a scam related to your taxes and/or the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), please visit: <http://www.irs.gov/individuals/article/0,,id=155344,00.html>.

- **Protect tax forms and supporting documentation**

Financial documents and personal information are valuable to fraudsters. Be sure to protect all tax documents you keep, and shred the documents you discard.

- **Safeguard your electronic files**

If your tax files and related information are stored on your personal computer, safeguard these electronic files with passwords and/or encryption.

- **Choose your tax preparers carefully**

According to the IRS, no matter who prepares your tax return, you are ultimately responsible for its accuracy. Investigate before selecting a reputable tax preparer—remember that this person or organization has unfettered access to your vital information. Be sure the preparer does not sell, share or release your information to third party sources.

- **Submit your return securely**

Send in your tax return electronically through a secure Web site. If you do send your completed tax return through the mail, take it to the post office rather than leaving it in your mailbox. Leaving your return in a publicly accessible mailbox makes you and your information a rich target.

In October, the IACP and Bank of America announced a three-year partnership to help consumers and law enforcement officials better understand and actively respond to identity crime. The first step in the project was the launch of a comprehensive Web site, [www.IDSafety.org](http://www.IDSafety.org), designed to help both consumer and law enforcement officials prevent and report identity crime, investigate the perpetrators, and respond effectively to victims. The IACP and Bank of America are currently developing a nationwide strategy aimed at further raising citizen awareness of identity crimes and the steps to prevent being victimized, as well as bolstering law enforcement's expertise in conducting investigations.

Identity crime awareness is the best defense any time of year. For additional identity crime prevention tips and information on the partnership, please visit [www.IDSafety.org](http://www.IDSafety.org).

## **About the Partners:**

### **International Association of Chiefs of Police**

Founded in 1893, the International Association of Chiefs of Police is the world's oldest and largest association of law enforcement executives with more than 19,000 members in 93 countries. For more information, visit [www.theiacp.org](http://www.theiacp.org).

### **Bank of America**

Bank of America is one of the world's largest financial institutions, serving individual consumers, small and middle market businesses and large corporations with a full range of banking, investing, asset management and other financial and risk-management products and services. The company provides unmatched convenience in the United States, serving more than 54 million consumer and small business relationships with more than 5,700 retail banking offices, nearly 17,000 ATMs and award-winning online banking with more than 19.8 million active users. Bank of America is the No. 1 overall Small Business Administration (SBA) lender in the United States and the No. 1 SBA lender to minority-owned small businesses. The company serves clients in 175 countries and has relationships with 98 percent of the U.S. Fortune 500 companies and 79 percent of the Global Fortune 500. Bank of America Corporation stock (NYSE: BAC) is listed on the New York Stock Exchange. For more information, visit [www.bankofamerica.com](http://www.bankofamerica.com).