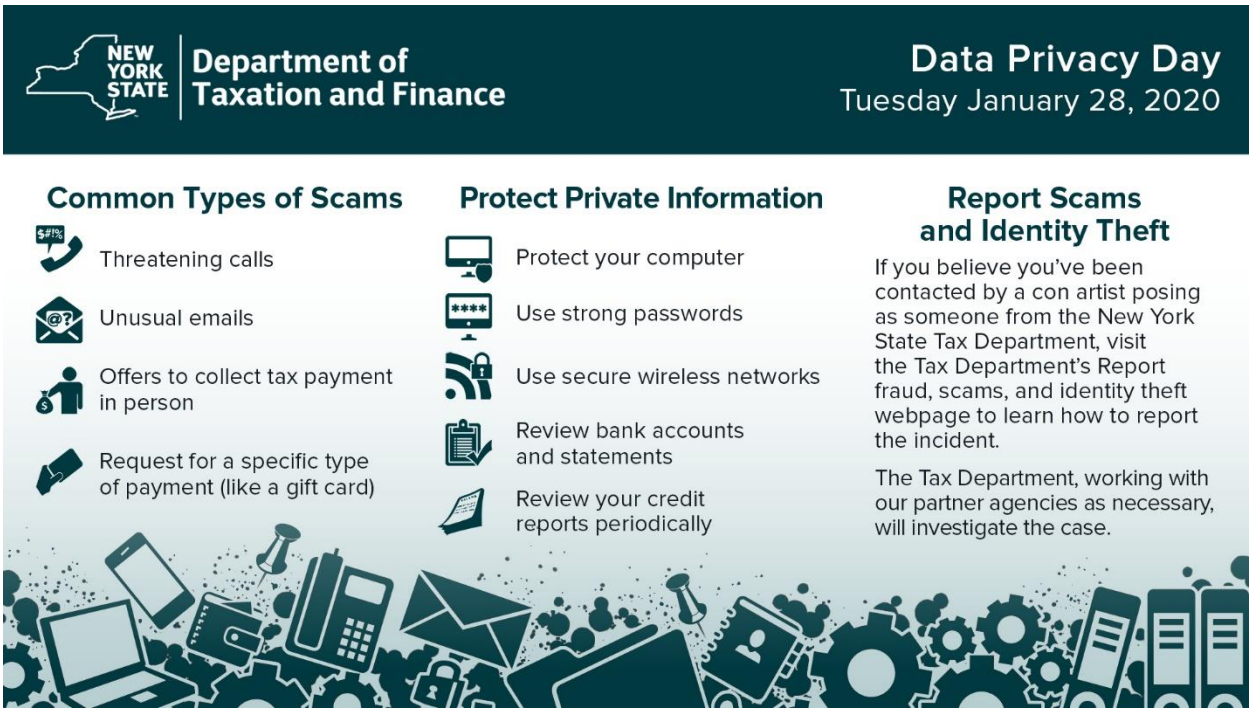
Secure Your Sensitive Information

Multiple NYS agencies partner to provide valuable security information and scam prevention tips on Data Privacy Day



The New York State Department of Taxation and Finance, the Office of Information Technology Services, Department of Financial Services, the Department of State's Division of Consumer Protection, and the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services encouraged New Yorkers to take a proactive approach to ensure their private information is secure online and at home.

To keep personal information and data safe, the New York State agencies are partnering to share these tips:

Be wary of unsolicited emails and telephone calls asking for personal information. Never share personal information, such as your Social Security number, in response to an unsolicited email or telephone call. If the email or call claims to be from a company with which you do business, call it first to confirm the contact is legitimate.

Secure your mobile devices. Apply software updates that patch known vulnerabilities as soon as they become available. Use security features built into your device such as a passcode and use programs that encrypt data and remotely wipe contents if the device is lost or stolen.

Be careful with Wi-Fi hotspots. Public wireless hotspots are not secure, which means that anyone could potentially see what you are doing on your mobile device while you are connected. Limit what you do on public Wi-Fi and avoid logging into sensitive accounts.

Know your apps. Thoroughly review the details and specifications of an app before you download it. Review and understand the privacy policy of each mobile app. Be aware that the app may request access to your location and personal information.

Be cautious about the information you share on social media. Avoid posting your birthdate, telephone number, home address, or images that identify your job or hobbies. This information may often reveal answers to security questions used to reset passwords, making you a possible target of scammers looking to access your accounts and secured information.

Use strong passwords. Create different passwords for all your accounts. Use 10 to 12 characters in a combination of letters (upper and lower case), numbers and symbols. Individuals should regularly change their passwords as well.

Change your security questions. Don't use the same security questions on multiple accounts. Be careful to select security questions for which only you know the answer. Make sure the answers cannot be guessed or found by searching social media or the internet.

Turn on two-step verification to access accounts. To enhance the security of your account, require your password and an extra security code to verify your identity whenever you sign-in to your accounts, where available.

Beware of phishing. Do not click on links, download files or open attachments in emails from unknown senders. It is best to open attachments only when you are expecting them and know what they contain, even if you know the sender. Access more information on phishing from the Office of Information Technology Services YouTube page.

Complete the New York State Data Privacy Consumer Survey

Through the New York State Data Privacy Consumer Survey, New York State is looking to identify what, if any, concerns New York consumers have carrying out transactions in the digital marketplace today. The results of the survey will be used to inform New York State policies regarding the online marketplace and social media, including possible new laws and regulations. All New Yorkers are encouraged to complete the survey.

Additional resources are available on the state agency websites here:

NYS Chief Information Security Office (New York State Office of Information Technology Services)

Report scams, fraud, and identity theft (New York State Department of Taxation and Finance)

Scams, schemes, & frauds (New York State Department of Financial Services)

Identity Theft Prevention and Mitigation Program Resources (New York State Department of State Division of Consumer Protection)

New York State Commissioner of Taxation and Finance Michael Schmidt said, "With the tax season underway, it's imperative that taxpayers do their part to help prevent confidential information from falling into the wrong hands. The Tax Department uses advanced encryption, firewalls, intrusion-detection systems, and other security measures to protect sensitive information, but taxpayers also have a vital role to play in safeguarding data."

Interim New York State Office of Information Technology Services Chief Information Officer Jeremy M. Goldberg said, "Under Governor Cuomo's leadership, NYS continues to tackle online privacy and security head-on by safeguarding personal information, minimizing risk, and preventing New Yorkers from falling prey to data thieves. In an increasingly digital and connected world, National Data Privacy Day reminds us of the simple and effective steps we must take to protect our information and remain vigilant against cybercrime."

Acting New York State Office of Information Technology Services Chief Information Security Officer Karen Sorady said, "Now more than ever, we need to be wary of the threats to our privacy that are ever-present while online. In recognition of National Data Privacy Day, all New Yorkers should remember the importance of protecting their personal data from cyber criminals. To this end, the state Office of Information Technology Services provides a wide array of helpful cyber tips for the public, in addition to online safety resources and real-time advisories that can help safeguard against cybercrime."

Superintendent of Financial Services Linda A. Lacewell said, "Safeguarding data is a top priority for DFS as demonstrated by the establishment of a new cybersecurity division and innovative DFS cybersecurity regulation that has paved the way for fellow state and federal regulators to adopt. We all play a significant role in protecting data, especially as reports of cyberattacks increase. The Department urges regulated entities to remain vigilant and take necessary steps to bolster protections to uphold the safety of consumers and New York's financial markets."

New York State Secretary of State Rossana Rosado said, "It's critical for all New Yorkers to be vigilant in protecting their online accounts to prevent data theft. With a growing number of consumers using the digital marketplace to buy basic goods, it is imperative that everyone understand how to secure their accounts. Data Privacy Day is a great opportunity to remind consumers of online dangers and to take basic steps to safeguard their information."

New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services Commissioner Patrick A. Murphy said, "Personal information has rapidly become one of the most valuable commodities for cyber criminals, making it more important for New Yorkers practice good cyber hygiene and follow safe behaviors while online. By following some basic practices and using common-sense, New Yorkers will go a long way in safeguarding themselves from identity theft or another internet crime."