

# Safeguarding Yourself and your Data

By Diane Osborne

Combatting today's cybercriminals takes all of us working together as data thefts are on the rise. Everyone should be educated about security threats and safeguards to protect our information and data.

## Take Basic Security Steps:

1. Learn to recognize phishing emails, especially those pretending to be from the IRS. The IRS will never contact you through email. Never open an embedded link or any attachment from a suspicious email.
2. Install anti-malware or anti-virus security software on all devices which prevents bad software from causing damage to your computer. Anti-spyware prevents unauthorized software from stealing information that is on your computer.
3. Create strong passwords. Use a minimum of 8 characters, longer is better. Use a combination of letters, numbers, and symbols. Avoid personal information or common passwords and change them frequently. Never give your password to anyone.
4. Encrypt all sensitive files that you send via email. Send only password-protected documents if you must share files via email.
5. Secure wireless networks. Failing to protect your wireless network makes the data vulnerable to attack by cybercriminals. They could be stealing your data without your knowledge.

If you can follow these basic security stops, you can help to keep your information safe.

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