

## Fake Insurance Tax Form Scam

### Cross References

- IR-2017-171, October 12, 2017

The Internal Revenue Service is alerting tax professionals and their clients to a fake insurance tax form scam that is being used to access annuity and life insurance accounts.

Cybercriminals currently are combining several tactics to create a complex scheme through which both tax professionals and taxpayers have been victimized.

There may be variations but here's how one scam works: The cybercriminal, impersonating a legitimate cloud-based storage provider, entices a tax professional with a phishing email. The tax professional, thinking they are interacting with the legitimate cloud-based storage provider, provides their email credentials including username and password.

With access to the tax professional's account, the cybercriminal steals client email addresses. The cybercriminal then impersonates the tax professional and sends emails to their clients, attaching a fake IRS insurance form and requesting that the form be completed and returned. The cybercriminal receives replies by fax and/or by an email very similar to the tax professional's email, using a different email service provider or a slight variation to the tax pro's address.

The subject line varies but may be "urgent information" or a similar request. The awkwardly worded text of the email states:

*Dear Life Insurance Policy Owner,  
Kindly fill the form attached for your Life insurance or Annuity contract details and fax back to us for processing in order to avoid multiple tax bill.*

The cybercriminal, using data from the completed form, impersonates the client and contacts the individual's insurance company. The cybercriminal then attempts to obtain a loan or make a withdrawal from those accounts.

The IRS reminds tax professionals to be aware of phishing emails, free offers and other common tricks by scammers. Those tax professionals who have data breaches should contact the IRS immediately through their Stakeholder Liaison.

Individuals who receive the insurance tax form scam email should forward it to phishing@irs.gov and then delete it. Individuals who completed and returned the fake tax form should contact their insurance carrier for assistance.