Chapter 3

Activity 3-1 Improving Your Reading Skills

**Directions:** Read the IRS passage that followsand focus on the content. After you have read the passage, key your answers to the activities that follow in the space provided.

IDENTITY THEFT

Identity theft remains a top priority for the Internal Revenue Service. Identity theft is one of the fastest growing crimes nationwide, and refund fraud caused by identity theft is one of the biggest challenges facing the IRS. This year, the IRS continues to take new steps and strong actions to protect taxpayers and help victims of identity theft and refund fraud.

Stopping refund fraud related to identity theft is a top priority for the tax agency. The IRS is focused on preventing, detecting, and resolving identity theft cases as soon as possible. The IRS has more than 3,000 employees working on identity theft cases. We have trained more than 35,000 employees who work with taxpayers to recognize and provide assistance when identity theft occurs.

Taxpayers can encounter identity theft involving their tax returns in several ways. One instance is where identity thieves try filing fraudulent refund claims using another person’s identifying information, which has been stolen. Innocent taxpayers are victimized because their refunds are delayed.

Here are some tips to protect you from becoming a victim, and steps to take if you think someone may have filed a tax return using your name:

Tips for Protecting Yourself from Identity Theft

• Do not carry your Social Security card or any documents that include your Social Security number (SSN) or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN).

• Do not give a business your SSN or ITIN just because they ask. Give it only when required.

• Protect your financial information.

• Check your credit report every 12 months.

• Secure personal information in your home.

• Protect your personal computers by using firewalls and anti-spam/virus software, updating security patches and changing passwords for Internet accounts.

• Do not give personal information over the phone, through the mail or on the Internet unless you have initiated the contact or you are sure you know who you are dealing with.

Reading Questions

1. Give one example of how taxpayers can encounter identify theft involving their tax returns.

<<Place Answer Here>>

2. Why do you think you should avoid carrying your Social Security number?

<<Place Answer Here>>

3. Which tip for protecting yourself against identify theft is of most importance to you?

<<Place Answer Here>>