

## ***Security Experts Urge Use of VPNs by Teleworking Tax Professionals***

Teleworking during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is a reality for tax professionals, whether as an option or a necessity. The Security Summit<sup>1</sup> is urging tax practitioners to secure remote locations by using a virtual private network (VPN) to protect against cyber intruders.

A VPN provides a secure, encrypted tunnel to transmit data between a remote user via the internet and the company network when teleworking or working from home. VPNs are critical to protecting and securing internet connections.

“Though cost is a legitimate concern, failure to use VPNs risks remote takeovers by cyberthieves; criminals can access the tax professional’s entire office network simply by accessing an employee’s remote internet connection,” said West Virginia Tax Department Deputy Tax Commissioner, Matt Irby. Tax professionals should seek out cybersecurity experts if possible. Practitioners can even search for “Best VPNs” to find legitimate vendors. Also, major technology sites often provide lists of top services.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Security Summit consists of the IRS, the West Virginia Tax Department, other states’ tax agencies, and the tax community -- including tax preparation firms, software developers, tax professional organizations, and financial institutions. Partners in the Security Summit work together to combat identity theft and fight other scams to protect the nation’s taxpayers.*