



If I've Lost My TFN, What Can I Do?

Your tax file number (TFN) is a critical piece of information in your possession and should be a constant companion throughout your life.

However, there are times when a TFN is misplaced or forgotten. What are you supposed to do?

If you forget your TFN or lose it, this can be a significant issue.

A TFN can be used for opening bank accounts, tracking super savings, applying for government benefits, and giving to higher education providers. If a TFN is stolen, it can be used to create these accounts in your name, increasing the chances of identity theft.

It's also required if you begin new employment, as you have 28 days to provide your new employer with your TFN before they start withholding tax from your pay at the maximum rate.

What Can You Do?

Your first avenue of inquiry, if you use the services of a tax agent or accountant, will be to ask them for your tax file number, as you will have previously provided it to them. If not, however, you can call the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) to find out what you can do to get your TFN.

The ATO will need to make certain you are who you say you are and that you're the correct person to discuss your tax affairs with (identity theft can and does occur) – so be ready to answer a few identifying questions.

You may also (if you haven't done so already) be invited to record a short "voiceprint", which is another security layer that can identify you the next time you call. Another option is to fill in a form provided by the ATO to apply for or inquire about a TFN. But as the ATO will only process the paperwork it provides taxpayers, you will need to order an actual paper form.

Check The Document Trail

Before you grab the phone to track down your lost TFN, you should check other places it may have been entered into.

You might want to rifle through your paperwork and check the following, as your TFN should be on them:

- your income tax "notice of assessment" for a previous year**
- any correspondence sent to you from the ATO**
- a payment summary from your employer**
- an account statement from your superannuation fund.**

If you have a physical folder or file that you keep your important information in, make sure to check it as well.

What If Your Tax File Number Was Stolen?

If your TFN has been stolen or accessed by an unauthorised third party, inform the ATO as soon as possible.

Your TFN can be used for identification purposes and may be used to steal your identity. The ATO's Client Identity Support Centres can give you further information, advice and assistance to re-establish your identity.

They may also apply security measures to monitor any suspicious activity on your account.

You can speak with your registered tax agent (such as us) as we may have it on file and be able to assist you with locating it.

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