



Private, protected communication is the oxygen for the transfer of sensitive information in today's environment. Insecure communication makes us all vulnerable. It is essential that you understand possible weak points so that we all have the most robust, confidentially protected conduit for correspondence.

To assist in securely communicating with Bennett Thrasher or any other company/individual, we wanted to provide these helpful safety tips when communicating sensitive information over the internet:

1. Never send sensitive information (account numbers, Social Security numbers or other documents that contain these types of information) via unsecured email. The use of a secure portal is recommended whenever possible.
2. Always check the email address when receiving and sending emails (especially in a "Reply" email). Phishing and Spoofed emails commonly use similar email addresses of known contacts as a way to deceive the recipients. The "From" email address can easily be manipulated by these threat actors. When communicating with Bennett Thrasher associates, emails will only come from our email domain or from our portal service (example: [john.smith@btcpa.net](mailto:john.smith@btcpa.net), [DoNotReply@cch.com](mailto:DoNotReply@cch.com))
3. When clicking on links in email communications, always hover over the hyperlink to confirm the address that appears in the window is the same as the expected destination. The safest method for accessing websites displayed within an email is to enter the intended address into your browser. A good example would be an email reminding you to change your password for Amazon or another online service. Best practice is to type [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) into your browser, select the login link and if you are required to change your password, you will most likely be prompted.
4. When using websites that have any type of login (especially ones that may contain sensitive or financial information), make sure it is a secure site. Look for the "HTTPS" in the beginning of the web address. This is one of the various indicators that will help you validate a secure website.
5. When at all possible, use Multi-Factor (also known as Two-Factor) Authentication. This process helps validate authorized access to secure sites. It

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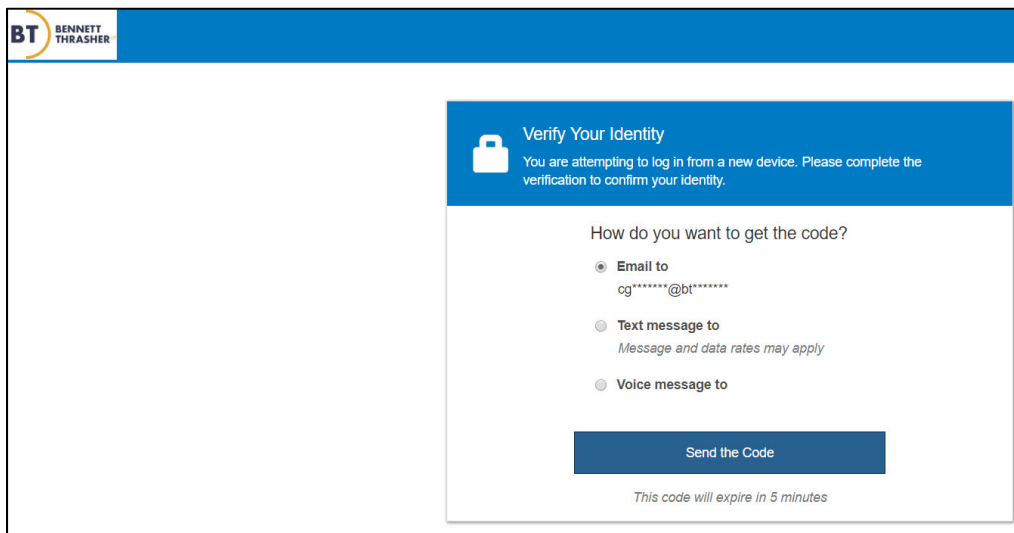
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commonly requires the user to provide a second method of validation when logging in. This typically consists of a separate code sent via email or text message. Most financial institutions, email providers and e-commerce companies offer/require some variation of Multi-Factor Authentication. The portal used by Bennett Thrasher requires Multi-Factor Authentication. You will see a screen similar to the one below when logging in for the first time from a device/browser as well as when the secure token expires.



Finally, we wanted to remind you how you can expect to communicate with Bennett Thrasher. Email and phone are our primary methods of communication. All associates can be reached by calling our main phone number 770.396.2200 or via email and only at our official Bennett Thrasher domain (@btcpa.net).

While we know email is the most convenient method of communication, it has many risks. Our secure portal is the method we prefer you to exchange documents. This includes files you send to your Bennett Thrasher contact as well as the files we send to you. Please be aware some Phishing emails focus on fake portals/document sharing sites like DropBox, ShareFile and GoogleDrive. ***Bennett Thrasher's official portal address is <https://www.clientaccess.com> and this link can also be found on our website under the "Client Resources" section of our website should you need it.***

Most of you received your engagement letter via our AssureSign service. This website allowed you to electronically sign your documents. For many of you, your tax preparer may also provide this option to e-Sign your tax return. You will receive a communication with further information related to this process.



A vigilant defense and a cynical attitude will help ward off phishing attempts. Examples of Phishing emails include requests that the recipient provide information related to their taxes be sent via email or through a non-secure website. These phishing emails typically use spoofed email addresses that are made to look similar to that of legitimate senders (*bennett.thrasher@email.com*, *@gmail.com* or any other variation). As a reminder, Bennett Thrasher associates only uses the **@btcpa.net** domain when communicating by email.

The IRS has continued to warn taxpayers of various scams related to tax preparation and refunds. A link to their webpage discussing these scams can be found below.

As with any of your tax related questions, please do not hesitate to email or call your Bennett Thrasher contact if you are suspicious about any communication claiming to be from Bennett Thrasher or one of our associates.

### **Helpful Websites**

- Bennett Thrasher Secure Portal: <https://www.clientaccess.com>
- IRS Scam Alert and Best Practices: <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/tax-scams-consumer-alerts>
- Stay Safe Online Best Practices: <https://staysafeonline.org/stay-safe-online/online-safety-basics/spam-and-phishing/>