Why you should never E-mail sensitive information:

The Internet is a wild place.

The Internet does not fit in a tidy box, and it doesn't look like the mystical cloud of information hovering above us that some of our terminology suggests. Instead, it is made up of an unfathomable number of machines and pathways that information is stored on or sent through. There are no direct paths between your machine and the information you look at, and the road signs for the information to travel by can be posted by anyone, with any motives. Paths can be hijacked and data can be scanned for profitable information, even while allowing messages to reach their destinations.

How Internet security works.

Despite its wild nature, the Internet is used for secure transactions. This is possible because everything that we want to keep safe is encrypted. When you log into a secure website (look for the http in the address to become http**s**- the s is for secure), your computer sets up a unique connection with the website server and they start to communicate in code. This way, if someone with malicious intent browses through the messages all they see is a bunch of gobbledygook. There is no effective way to control where your information travels, so the strategy is to keep it from being useful to anyone reading it along the way.

What's wrong with E-mail?

Even though the web page you log into to access your email might be secure, once you send an email it is no longer safe. E-mail was never designed with security in mind, and it is not encrypted when it travels from you to your recipient. E-mailing sensitive information, like your SSN or secure account information, is a lot like writing it on a post card and putting it in the mail. Anyone who handles it along its route could steal your information without any sign of their activities.

That's why we have secure Online accounts.

When you sign up for one of our secure Online accounts, you instantly have access to a much better way of transferring sensitive financial information to us. The file exchange function in your account encrypts all files as they travel to our office, making them useless to hackers. And all your information is stored on servers that are carefully guarded and encrypted to keep your information even safer. So during tax season, or any time you need to communicate sensitive information, use file exchange, and don't email anything you wouldn't write on a post card.