

Stewart – Massachusetts Mid-Week Update – January 6, 2021

Happy New Year! We hope you were able to take some time over the holidays to recharge. January is shaping up to be another busy month.

In our first update of 2021, we want to invite you to our January webinar, which focuses on wire fraud trends and prevention – read below for details and registration information. As you're getting ready to prepare your 1099 filings, you'll also start receiving them in the mail, so we wanted to make you aware of some of the changes in the tax law resulting from the CARES Act. For those of you who represent landlords or tenants, we want to make you aware of an additional requirement that was included as part of the Massachusetts budget bill which was signed by the Governor at the end of December. As always, the scammers have found a new way to trick people into clicking on a dangerous link, and so we want to let you know about that as well.

- *Webinar - January 13th – From Phishing to Wire Fraud, A Conversation with the US Secret Service*

Join us on January 13, 2021 at 10 AM for this important webinar. Tom Cronkright, CEO of CertifID, along with a U.S. Secret Service Agent who specializes in financial crimes, will discuss the latest phishing tactics, the growth of business email compromise, and measures to lower your risk in 2021. This is an exclusive event for Stewart agents. Topics will include:

- Recent phishing strategies, including email and spoofed websites
- How COVID has impacted business email compromise and the ability to divert wire transfers
- 2020 fraud trends - year in review
- Strategies for aligning people, process and technology to lower your risk of business email compromise and wire fraud for your company and customers

To register for the webinar, follow this

link: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_0cYZGH6vTAiZHcsl0sqiag

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Laurie Goodwin, Agency Support Coordinator at Laurie.Goodwin@Stewart.com or (781) 697-3332.

- *Tax Law Changes for 2021*

A new year means new tax laws. In addition to tax code changes, 2020 has some additional changes brought about by the CARES Act. The changes include the ability to deduct charitable donations even if you don't itemize deductions, increased income brackets and an increase in the standard deduction amounts. Read about the changes here: <https://www.yahoo.com/now/7-biggest-tax-changes-2021-224400711.html>

- *New Eviction Requirement in Massachusetts*

Included as part of the year-end budget bill in Massachusetts is a requirement that landlords provide an attestation form to a residential tenant when serving a notice to quit. The law is Chapter 257 of the Acts of 2020. While the full text of the bill has not been posted to the

Commonwealth's site, the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development has a webpage containing additional information, along with a PDF version of the required form. More information can be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/notice-to-quit-attestation-form-and-submission-information>

- *Email Scam – No, That's Not a Video of You!*

We know scammers will stop at nothing to try to get your private login information. One of the latest scams is an email that purports to be from someone you know and asks: "Is this a video of you?" The email contains a blurred-out screenshot and a link to click to view the video. The link, of course, takes you to a bogus page set up by the scammer to get your login credentials.

Before you click on an email link, make sure the sender is who they purport to be. Look at the link to see where it's actually taking you before you click. To learn more about phishing and e-mail compromise, please join us for the January 13th webinar.

- *Stewart's Massachusetts COVID-19 Resource Page*

Please view our resource page which contains all the local information relative to underwriting guidance, affidavits, registry closures and frequently asked questions. This site will be updated regularly. To access click [HERE](#) and make it a favorite on your web-browser. You can also copy the following URL and paste it into your web

browser: <https://www.stewart.com/content/stewart/stewartcom/en/stg/massachusetts/underwriting-resources/forms-policy-information/covid-19-info-resources.html>



200 5th Avenue, Suite 301, Waltham, MA 02451

Phone: 800-628-2988 Fax: 781-697-3336

Monarch Place - 1414 Main Street, Suite 1835, Springfield, MA 01144

Phone: 413-930-8090 Fax: 978-964-0565

Tiziano Doto, Agency Services Manager - tiziano.doto@stewart.com

Jutta R. Deeney, VP, State Counsel - jutta.deeney@stewart.com

Shannon Coleman, Underwriting Counsel - scoleman@stewart.com

Christine Provost, Associate Senior Underwriting Counsel - christine.provost@stewart.com

Tracie Kester, Underwriting Counsel - tracie.kester@stewart.com

Paula M. Cuculo, Underwriting Counsel - paula.cucoulo@stewart.com

General MA Underwriting Mailbox - massuwing@stewart.com

Tracy Hawkins, Agency Sales Representative Sr. - tracy.hawkins@stewart.com

Rita Kelly-Parsley, Agency Sales Representative Sr. - rita.kelly-parsley@stewart.com

Tom Potito, Agency Sales Representative Sr. - tom.potito@stewart.com

Mary Blomerth, Agency Sales Representative Sr. - mary.blomerth@stewart.com

Lyslie A. DeMeo, Agency Sales Representative, Sr. - ldemeo@stewart.com