

# Aadhaar for I-T returns: CBDT backs data safety

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**Mumbai:** The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) recently issued a memorandum refraining income tax officials from publishing Aadhaar numbers, demographic details or personal sensitive information such as bank details.

In other words, it has asked its officials to ensure that sensitive data of taxpayers, including their Aadhaar number, is not available in public domain. Such disclosure, the memo points out, is in contravention of the Aadhaar Act and the Information Technology Act. I-T offi-

cial have also been asked to furnish a compliance report. "Any such content already published and still appearing publicly must be discontinued with immediate effect," adds the memo. It is the salaried employees who will be the first to file their income tax after the implementation of the new requirement to provide Aadhaar or Aadhaar enrolment number in I-T returns. The filing due date is July 31 for the income earned during financial year 2016-17. For businessmen the due date is much later.

The Finance Act has made Aadhaar mandatory for filing of the I-T returns as well

as for obtaining and retaining the permanent account number (PAN). "Leakage of Aadhaar details, in some instances, which were available in the public domain, including the much publicized instance of cricketer M S Dhoni has caused anxiety among taxpayers. The memo sends the right signals to both tax officials and the public on protection of sensitive information," says a government official.

"Thus, even as the hearing on mandatory usage of Aadhaar is ongoing at the apex court, CBDT's circular may quell some anxieties," says a chartered accountant.