

Identity Theft

What is identity theft

How they do it

Preventive actions

Internet and on-line services

Credit reports (who to contact)

Steps for victims

Reporting identity theft

Complaints

Bottom line

What Is Identity Theft

- Acquiring key pieces of someone's identifying information in order to impersonate them
 - **Name**
 - **Address**
 - **Date of Birth**
 - **SSAN**
 - **Mother's maiden name**

What Is Identity Theft

- Take over financial accounts
- Open new bank accounts
- Applying for loans
- Applying for credit cards
- Applying for social security benefits
- Purchase automobiles
- Renting apartments
- Establishing services with utility and phone companies

How They Do It

- Use low and high tech methods
- Shoulder surfing at ATMs
- Steal your mail
- Dumpster diving
- Corrupting postal employees
- Check washing
 - Mostly in Western U.S.
 - Related to Meth use (similarly used chemicals)
- Check creation software

Preventive Actions

- Promptly remove mail from your mail box
- Deposit outgoing mail in post office collection mail boxes or at your local post office
 - Do not leave in unsecured mail receptacles
- Never give personal information over the telephone unless you initiated the call
- Shred pre-approved credit card applications, credit card receipts, bills and other financial information you don't want
- Empty your wallet/purse of extra credit cards and IDs

Preventive Actions

- Order your credit report from the three credit bureaus once a year to check for discrepancies
- Never leave receipts at bank machines, bank windows, trash receptacles, or unattended gasoline pumps
- Memorize your SSAN and all your passwords
- Sign all new credit cards upon receipt
- Save all credit card receipts and match them against your monthly bills
- Be conscious of normal receipt of financial statements
 - Contact sender if they are not received on time

Preventive Actions

- Notify credit card companies and financial institutions in advance of any change of address or phone number
- Never loan your credit cards to anyone else
- Never put account numbers on post cards or on the outside of an envelope
- If you applied for a new credit card and it hasn't arrived in a timely manner, call the bank or credit card company involved
- Report all lost or stolen credit cards immediately
- Know your expiration dates
 - Contact issuer if replacements are not received promptly

Preventive Actions

- Beware of mail or telephone solicitations disguised as promotions offering instant prizes or awards designed solely to obtain your personal information or credit card numbers

Internet and On-Line Services

- Use caution when disclosing checking account numbers, credit card numbers or other personal financial data at any web site or on-line service location unless you receive a secured authentication key from your provider
- When you subscribe to an on-line service, you may be asked to give credit card information
 - When you enter an interactive service site, beware of con artists who may ask you to “confirm” your enrollment service by disclosing passwords or the credit card account number you used to subscribe

Action Steps For Victims

- Contact all creditors, by phone and in writing, to inform them of the problem
- Call your nearest Postal Inspection Service office and your local police
- Contact the Federal Trade Commission to report the problem
- Call each of the three credit bureau's fraud units to report identity theft
 - Ask to have a “Fraud Alert/Victim Impact” statement placed in your credit file asking that creditors call you before opening any new accounts
- Alert your bank to flag your accounts and to contact you to confirm unusual activity

Action Steps For Victims

- Request a change of PIN and new password
- Keep a log of all contacts and make copies of all documents
- You may also wish to contact a privacy or consumer advocacy group regarding illegal activity
- Contact the Social Security Administration's Fraud Hotline
- Contact the state office of the Department of Motor Vehicles to see if another license was issued in your name
 - If so, request a new license number and fill out the DMV's complaint form to begin the fraud investigation process

Report Identity Theft To

- Equifax Credit Bureau, Fraud
 - 1-800-525-6285
- Experian Information Solutions
 - 1-888-397-3742
- TransUnion Credit Bureau, Fraud
 - 1-800-680-7289
- Federal Trade Commission
 - 1-877-FTC-HELP
- Social Security Administration, Fraud Hotline
 - 1-800-269-0271

Bottom Line

- Identity Theft is growing bigger everyday
- It can destroy your credit
- It can cause you great distress
- It can impact your future

YOU

END UP HAVING TO PROVE

YOU'RE

INNOCENT