

What is Identity Theft?

Identity Theft involves acquiring key pieces of someone's identifying information, such as name, address, date of birth, Social Security number and mother's maiden name in order to impersonate them. This information enables the identity thief to commit numerous forms of fraud which include, but are not limited to, taking over your financial accounts, opening new bank accounts, purchasing automobiles, applying for loans, credit cards, and Social Security benefits, renting apartments, and establishing services with utility and phone companies including cellular phone companies.

What can you do to Prevent Identity Theft?

In this information age of computers it is almost impossible to completely prevent Identity Theft. The availability of computer-friendly programs and the speed of communications via the internet and web-based loan lenders have multiplied those who would commit fraud on your good name and credit. We in law enforcement, the public sector and private sector are working together in order to try to effectively combat the high tech thieves from acquiring your personal information but we need your help in this ongoing battle. There are some simple, but effective things you can do.

- Be aware of your purse while shopping at grocery stores, in crowds and malls. Never leave your purse alone in your cart or while walking in the store or a crowd. Keep your purse opening against your body and closed. If you feel a bump against you, immediately check your purse or wallet to see if someone has opened it or taken your wallet. Even the most innocent looking person could be the thief.
- If you work in an office environment, lock your purse even when stepping away to the washroom. If someone is found in an office area where they don't belong and say they are looking for a job, person, etc ...look for a missing wallet or purse and call 911.

- Empty your wallet of extra credit cards and IDs, cancel the ones you do not use and maintain a list of the ones you do. Keep an emergency phone number list of the bank/ credit card companies who have your accounts.
- Promptly remove mail from your mailbox after delivery. Deposit your outgoing mail at your local post office. Do not leave your mail in unsecured mail boxes with the mail protruding or the mail flag indicating you have mail.
- **Never** give personal information over the telephone, such as: Social Security number, date of birth, mother's maiden name, credit card number, or bank account, Personal Identification Numbers (PIN) codes, and bank routing numbers, unless you have initiated the phone call.
- Shred credit card bills, pre-approved credit applications, receipts, and other financial information you don't want before discarding them in the trash or recycling bin.
- **Never** leave copies of receipts at bank machines, copies of checks, or personal information at bank counters, in bank trash receptacles, or at unattended gasoline pumps. Even though most banks and credit card machines now print out the last four (4) numbers of your credit cards some print out your number.
- Memorize your passwords for your bank credit cards. **Do not record them** on the cards or on anything in your wallet or purse.
- Be conscious of all your normal credit and bank monthly statements. If you notice you did not receive one, contact the financial institution and post office. Make sure the statement was sent out and watch your mail. If you still do not receive the statement, close the account due to possible fraud.
- Never loan your credit or debit cards to anyone. Report all lost or stolen credit cards immediately.
- Monitor all the expiration dates on your credit cards. Contact the credit card issuer if replacement cards are not received prior to the expiration dates. Credit card companies are mailing the PIN codes separate from the credit cards.
- 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.
- Order your credit report from the three major credit bureaus once a year to check for fraudulent activity or other discrepancies.

Internet and On-Line Services

With the advent of internet banking, it has been found offenders can open accounts using your personal information without even going to the institution.

When you subscribe to an on-line service, you may be asked to give your credit card information. Beware of computer hackers and con artists if you receive any request for verification to confirm your passwords or credit card numbers used to subscribe or pay for an order or service.

If you are a Victim of Identity Theft

- Contact the Police Department and we will assist you with notifying the proper jurisdictions.
- Keep a file and a log of all your contacts; names, dates, etc. and make copies of all documents.
- Call each of the three credit bureau's fraud units to report identity theft. Ask to have a "Fraud Alert/Victim Impact" statement be placed on your credit file and ask that any and

all new creditors contact you before opening new accounts.

- Alert your banks to flag your accounts. If your bank accounts have been attacked close that account and open a new one.
- Contact all creditors, by phone and in writing, to inform them of the problem.
- Call your U.S. Post Office and verify no change of addresses have been placed on your address. If there has been a change of address inform them of the Identity Theft and ask them to notify their Postal Inspection Unit.
- Contact the Federal Trade Commission to report the problem. Complete the Identity Theft form on-line or by mail.
- Contact the Social Security Administration's Fraud Hotline.
- Contact the Illinois Secretary of State to see if another driver's license or photo ID has been issued in your name. If one has been issued, notify them and request a complaint form to initiate a fraud investigation.
- Contact the Chicago Metropolitan Identity theft Fraud Task Force, which includes the U.S. Attorney's Office, the U.S. Postal Inspector, the Federal Trade Commission, the Illinois Attorney General's Office and the Illinois Secretary of State Police.
- If the identity theft has occurred on the internet contact the National White Collar Crime Center. They are an internet support service and a complaint service comprised of the FBI, U.S. Postal Service and the National White Collar Crime Center. Complete the on-line complaint form to initiate an investigation.

**QUESTIONS? Call the
Streamwood Police Department
at 630-736-3700 or e-mail us at:
police@streamwood.org**

Where to Report Identity Theft

- **Equifax Credit Bureau Fraud Unit**
800-525-6285
- **Experian Information Solutions**
(Formerly TRW) (888) 680-7289
- **TransUnion Credit Bureau Fraud Unit**
(800) 680-7289
- **Federal Trade Commission**
(FTC) (www.FTC.gov)
(877) IDTheft (1-877-438-4338) or
877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357)
- **National White Collar Crime Center**
7401 Beaufont Springs Drive, Suite 300
Richmond, VA 23225 (www.nw3c.org)
- **Social Security Administration Fraud Hotline** (800) 269-0271
- **Chicago Metropolitan Identity Fraud Task Force** (312) 781-4545
- **Americans for Consumer Education & Competition** www.acecusa.org/tips
- **The Privacy Council**
www.privacycouncil.com
- **Streamwood Post Office**
115 E. Irving Park Road
Streamwood, IL 60107
630-837-3500

Who to Contact For Copies of Your Credit Report

- **Equifax**
P.O. Box 105873
Atlanta, GA 30348-5873
Telephone: 800-997-2493
- **Experian Information Solutions**
(Formerly TRW)
P.O. Box 949
Allen, TX 75013-0949
Telephone: 888-397-3742
- **TransUnion**
P.O. Box 390
Springfield, PA 19064-0390
Telephone: 800-916-8800



STREAMWOOD POLICE DEPARTMENT

