

What is Identity Theft?

Identity theft occurs when someone uses your personal information such as your name, social security number, credit card number or other identifying information without your permission to commit fraud or other crimes.

Identity Theft is on the Rise - Why?

- Financial rewards
- Relative ease of committing the crime
- Low probability of being caught

How Do Thieves Obtain Your Information?

- Steal purses or wallets
- Dumpster dive
- Shoulder surf
- Steal from mailboxes
- Phishing
- Pretext calling
- Skimming
- Car, office, and athletic club prowling
- Hackers

What is Done With Your Information?

- Open credit card accounts in your name
- Open bank accounts in your name
- Counterfeit checks, credit or debit cards, or authorize electronic transfers in your name, and drain your bank account
- Obtain identification such as a driver's license issued with their picture in your name
- Give your information during an arrest
- Purchase vehicles
- Buy or sell real estate

What To Do If It Happens

- File a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission, www.ftc.gov or call 1-877-438-4338.
- File a report with local police in the community where the identity theft took place.
- Place a fraud alert on your credit reports, including a statement that creditors should get your permission before opening any new accounts in your name.
- Close the accounts that you know, or believe have been tampered with or opened fraudulently.

	Report Fraud	Website
Experian	1-888-397-3742	www.experian.com
Equifax	1-888-766-0008	www.equifax.com
Trans Union	1-800-680-7289	www.tuc.com

PROTECTING YOUR IDENTITY con't

How to Prevent Identity Theft from Occurring

- Don't give out personal information
- Treat your mail and trash carefully
- Don't carry your SSN card
- Carry only necessary identification
- Be cautious when responding to promotions
- Shred unwanted documents containing personal information
- Check your credit reports
- Scrutinize bank and credit card statements
- Don't write down passwords
- Be careful at ATMs

For free annual credit report visit www.annualcreditreport.com or call 1-877-322-8228.

Types of Fraud and Scams

Lottery or Sweepstakes Scam

You receive an unsolicited letter from an international lottery indicating you have won and a check is enclosed to pay fees and taxes. You are instructed to deposit the check into your account and withdraw the cash and send a Western Union or Money Gram to the sender. You're guaranteed that when they get your payment, you'll get your prize.

Overpayment Scam

Check overpayment scams target consumers selling cars or other valuable items through classified ads or online auction sites. Unsuspecting sellers get stuck when scammers pass off bogus cashier's checks, corporate checks, or personal checks. The scam artist comes up with a reason for writing the check for more than the purchase price. The scammer asks the seller to wire back the difference after depositing the check. The seller does it and later when the scammer's check bounces, the seller is left liable for the entire amount.

Secret Shopper Scam

The consumer is hired to be a secret shopper and is asked to evaluate the effectiveness of a money transfer service. The consumer is given a check, told to deposit it in their bank account and withdraw the amount in cash. Then, the consumer is told to take the cash to the money transfer service specified. (Typically, they send the transfer to a person in a Canadian city.) Then the consumer is supposed to evaluate their experience.

Work at Home

You are hired on the basis of an email or phone call, without any personal interview or background check. They ask you to process payments by depositing checks or money orders in your bank accounts. That's not how legitimate companies operate.

Foreign Investors Scam

Letters arrive by e-mail or in the mail and indicate the writer has inherited or acquired a large sum of money, and they need assistance in moving the money. You are assured that the transaction is legitimate, but the utmost trust is required. You receive the funds in the form of an official check and send the funds on, less the administrative fee. After depositing the check, it later comes back.

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Credit Card Scam

You receive a call from a person claiming to be with the Security and Fraud Department at Visa. They will give you a badge number and tell you your card has been flagged for an unusual purchase pattern. They verify a purchase for an Anti-Telemarketing Device for \$497.99 from a marketing company based in Arizona. When you say "No," the caller says they will issue a credit to your account. The caller asks you to verify you are in possession of your card and to turn the card over and look for some numbers. There are seven numbers on the back of the card; these are the numbers you sometimes use to make internet purchases to prove you have the card. The caller will ask you to read the numbers to him. After you do that, the caller will say, "That is correct, I just needed to verify you were in possession of the card." Within 15 minutes from the time you hang up, transactions of unauthorized purchases will begin showing up on your account.

Protecting Yourself

- Resist the urge to enter foreign lotteries.
- Know who you are dealing with and never wire money to strangers.
- If you're selling something, don't accept a check for more than the selling price.
- Be alert to Postal Money Orders, American Express Gift Cheques, and American Express Travelers Cheques.
- Postal Money Orders can be verified at 1-866-459-7822, they will need this information from the check:
 1. Money Order Serial Number (11 digits)
 2. Money Order dollar amount
 3. Money Order Post Office ID (6 digits)
- American Express Travelers Cheques and Gift Cheques can be verified at 1-800-525-7641 or 1-800-221-7282. Enter the amount and the check serial number.
- American Express Gift Cheques are only issued in \$25, \$50, and \$100 denominations. Denominations of \$500 are fraudulent and are circulating.