

Identity Theft – the fastest growing crime in the United States

10 Ways to Protect Your Identity

1. Your Social Security Number is the key to your identity. Never give it out over the phone, internet, mail, or in person unless you have initiated the contact. (No matter whom they claim to be.
2. Have your mail sent to a Post Office Box.
3. Buy a home shredder. Shred all paperwork, old checks, pre-approved credit cards, etc.
4. Cancel all credit cards you have not used in the past 6 months.
5. Avoid opening “Instant Credit” accounts at local stores.
6. **Never** leave a purse in your vehicle or a shopping buggy, no matter how well hidden.
7. Keep Social Security Cards at home, **not** in your wallet or purse.
8. Have your Social Security Number removed from your driver’s license and leave your phone number, date of birth, Social Security Number, and driver’s license number off of your checks.
9. Run a credit check on yourself every 6 months.
10. Report any suspected fraud to your local police, major credit bureaus, and the Federal Trade Commission.

What to do if you are a victim of Identity Theft?

File a report with the police. Get a copy of the report in case your bank, Credit Card Company, or insurance company needs proof of the crime.

Immediately contact the fraud departments of the major credit reporting agencies and ask them to put a fraud alert on your account. That way Creditors must then contact you before any new accounts are opened in your name.

- Equifax 1-800-525-6285
- Experian 1-888-397-3742
- TransUnion 1-800-680-7289

File a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission’s Identity Theft Hotline, 1-877-ID-THEFT.

For additional crime prevention information, see the following web sites:

National Crime Prevention Council – www.ncpc.org

National Sheriffs Association – www.usaonwatch.org