

Avoiding Identity Theft

Millions of people have their identities stolen each year according to the U.S. Federal Trade Commission. Find out what you can do to protect yourself and family members against this costly crime.

Learn the dos and don'ts for detecting and resolving problems related to identity theft.



Dos

1. Shred all documents containing personal financial information.
2. Review the Social Security Benefits statement you receive each year carefully.
3. Monitor your financial accounts online.
4. Lock up your wallet or purse at work.
5. Leave credit and debit cards locked up at home unless you plan to use them.
6. Install a locked mailbox or use a post office box to receive your mail.
7. Make sure you have up-to-date anti-virus and anti-spyware programs running on your computer.
8. Check your credit reports at least once a year.

Don'ts

1. Carry identification cards that include your Social Security number.
2. E-mail personal or financial information.
3. Divulge personal information over the phone.
4. Leave checks or bills to be mailed in unlocked mailboxes.
5. Print your driver's license number, phone number, or Social Security number on your checks.
6. Store passwords on your computer or write them down.
7. Use easy-to-guess passwords that include your name, address, birth date, or consecutive guessable numbers.