

# **5 QUICK TIPS ON AVOIDING IDENTITY THEFT: THE FASTEST GROWING CRIME IN AMERICA**

**TIP #1: Safeguard your personal information**

- Shred financial documents and other paperwork that may contain personal information.
- Don't carry your Social Security card in your wallet, never carry more credit cards than you need, and cancel credit card accounts you don't use.
- Never give out personal information via phone, through the mail, or over the Internet.

**TIP #2: Never click on links sent in unsolicited emails and use firewalls, anti-spyware, and anti-virus software to protect your home computer; keep them up-to-date.**

**TIP #3: Don't use an obvious password like your birth date, your mother's maiden name, or the last four digits of your Social Security number. And don't use the same password on multiple sites.**

**TIP #4: Keep your personal information in a secure place at home. Never leave mail unattended in an unsecure mailbox – this provides a ripe opportunity for theft.**

**TIP #5: Routinely monitor your financial accounts and billing statements and inspect your credit reports.**

Prepared and distributed by the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute.



# **IF YOU BELIEVE YOU'VE BEEN A VICTIM OF IDENTITY THEFT:**

- 1. Place a fraud alert on your credit reports, and review your credit reports.**

TransUnion: 1-800-680-7289; [www.transunion.com](http://www.transunion.com); Fraud Victim Assistance Division, P.O. Box 6790, Fullerton, CA 92834-6790

Equifax: 1-800-525-6285; [www.equifax.com](http://www.equifax.com); P.O. Box 740241, Atlanta, GA 30374-0241

Experian: 1-888-EXPERIAN (397-3742); [www.experian.com](http://www.experian.com); P.O. Box 9554, Allen, TX 75013

- 2. Close the accounts that you know, or believe, have been tampered with or opened fraudulently.**

- 3. File a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission.**

You can file a complaint with the FTC using the online complaint form; or call the FTC's Identity Theft Hotline, toll-free: 1-877-ID-THEFT (438-4338); TTY: 1-866-653-4261; or write Identity Theft Clearinghouse, Federal Trade Commission, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20580. Be sure to call the Hotline to update your complaint if you have any additional information or problems.

- 4. File a report with your local police or the police in the community where the identity theft took place.**

# OTHER RESOURCES

Report the fraudulent use of your Social Security number to:

**Social Security Administration**  
**Office of the Inspector General**  
**P.O. Box 17768**  
**Baltimore, MD 21235**  
**Phone: 800.269.0271 (OIG Fraud/Waste/Abuse Hotline)**  
**E-mail: [oig.hotline@ssa.gov](mailto:oig.hotline@ssa.gov)**

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) maintains the Identity Theft Data Clearinghouse — the federal government's centralized identity theft complaint database — and provides information to identity theft victims. For more information, contact:

**Federal Trade Commission**  
**Identity Theft Clearinghouse**  
**600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW**  
**Washington, DC 20580**  
**Toll-Free Hotline: 877.IDTHEFT (877.438.4338)**  
**TDD: 202.326.2502**  
**<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/idtheft/>**

If you suspect an identity thief has filed a change of address or has used the mail to commit bank or credit fraud, notify the U.S. Postal Inspector's Office post office. Theft of mail is a felony. Determine where the fraudulent credit cards were sent. Notify the local Postmaster for that address to forward all mail in your name to your own address. You may also need to talk with the local mail carrier for that address as well.

**Criminal Investigations Service Center**  
**ATTN: Mail Fraud**  
**222 S. Riverside Plaza, Suite 1250**  
**Chicago, IL 60606 - 6100**  
**Phone: 877.876.2453**  
**<https://postalinspectors.uspis.gov/forms/MailFraudComplaint.aspx>**

You may need to change your driver's license number if someone is using your number fraudulently. Call the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles' Information Center.

**Virginia Motor Vehicle Enforcement**  
**2300 West Broad Street**  
**Richmond, VA 23220**  
**Phone: 804.367.0538**  
**[www.dmv.state.va.us](http://www.dmv.state.va.us)**



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