

This brochure is provided by the Florida Department of Health, Office of Vital Statistics as an informational resource for people who want to protect themselves from identity theft and for people who have become victims of identity theft.

This brochure does not contain all of the information available. It is a starting point to help you find many of the resources and solutions that you will need.



RESOURCES

Social Security Fraud Hotline
800-269-0271

Federal Trade Commission
Identity Theft Hotline
877-438-4338
ftc.gov/idtheft

U.S. Department of Justice
Office for Victims of Violent Crime (OJP)
P.O. Box 600
Rockville, MD 20849-6000
800-851-3420
www.idtheft.gov

Identity Theft Resource Center
idtheftcenter.org

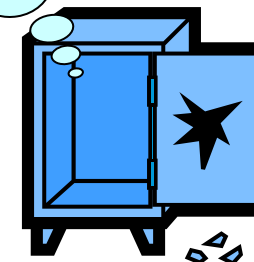
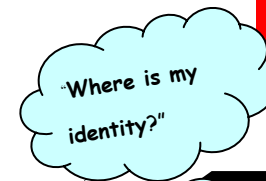
Credit Bureaus (examples)
Equifax: 800-525-6285
Experian: 888-397-3742
Trans Union: 800-680-7289

Florida Highway Patrol
Bureau of Investigations
www.fhp.state.fl.us/BuOfIn/

Contact the nearest
U.S. Postal Inspection Service Division

Opt-out of pre-screened credit approvals
888-567-8688

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IDENTITY THEFT

How can I prevent it?

What should I do if I become a victim?

Provided by
the Florida Office of Vital Statistics

WHAT IS IDENTITY THEFT?

Identity theft occurs when someone pretends to be you. Then, pretending to be you, they apply for credit, buy cars, commit crimes, obtain a passport, or any number of things that you might or might not do or authorize.

IDENTITY THEFT IS A CRIME

Under § 817.568, Florida Statute, taking the identity of another person is a felony and can result in imprisonment up to a minimum of 10 years and a fine up to \$15,000. In addition, the theft can be charged along with any other crimes committed while using your identity.

HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF FROM IDENTITY THEFT?

Any one of us can become a victim of identity theft. This is a crime that strikes all economic classes, all sections of the country, and all ages. Identity thieves will even steal the identity of someone who has died. Statistically, Florida is number six in the nation for reported cases of identity theft.

The following are some ways to protect your identity:

- Do not carry extra credit cards, your Social Security card, passport, or birth certificate except when absolutely necessary.
- Install a locked mailbox at your residence or use a post office box to reduce the chance of mail theft.
- Pick up new checks at your bank.
- Do not leave paid bills in your mailbox for the postal carrier to pick up.

- Ask your financial institutions to add extra security protection to your account. Most will allow you to use an additional code when accessing your account.
- Protect your Social Security Number at all costs. Do not let merchants write your SSN on your checks. Request merchants to use other forms of identification.
- Never allow credit card numbers to be written on your checks.
- Do not use your birth date or mother's maiden name as PIN numbers or passwords.
- Be careful with passwords and PIN numbers. Do not use the same one for everything. Change your passwords and PIN numbers from time to time.
- Remove your name from the marketing lists of the three credit reporting bureaus - Equifax, Experian, and Trans Union. Do not give any OPT-OUT service your SSN, date of birth, mother's maiden name, or other personal identification information.
- Shred all paperwork with financial and personal information on it before throwing it in the garbage.
- Do not give out personal information over the phone, through the mail, or over the Internet unless you know who you are dealing with.
- Obtain a copy of your credit report at least once or twice a year. Check it for errors or possible fraudulent information. You can receive one free credit report a year.

Check with each credit bureau.

MY IDENTITY HAS BEEN STOLEN, WHAT DO I DO NOW?

1. Contact the fraud departments of all of the major credit bureaus (numbers on back). Tell them you are an identity theft victim and you want a fraud alert placed on your file. Also, ask for a current copy of your credit report.
2. Contact your creditors and let them know you are a victim. These include mortgage holders, credit card companies, telephone and utility companies, banks, etc.
3. Change your passwords and PIN numbers immediately.
4. File a report with your local police department where the theft took place. Get a copy of the report.
5. If the theft of your identity is the result of stolen mail, report it to the U.S. Postal Inspector.
6. If your bank accounts or credit card accounts have been tampered with, close them immediately and open new ones. Establish "PASSWORD-ONLY" access to the new accounts.
7. If the thief is using your Social Security Number, report it to the Social Security Fraud Hotline.

Notification phone numbers are located on the back of this brochure.