

Resources

Credit Bureaus:

Equifax: 1-800-525-6285
www.equifax.com
Experian: 1-888-397-3742
www.experian.com
Trans Union: 1-800-680-7289
www.tuc.com

To obtain a free credit report once a year from each credit bureau visit:

www.annualcreditreport.com

This site is the only service authorized by the three credit bureaus for this purpose.

Federal Agencies:

Federal Trade Commission:
1-877-IDTHEFT
www.ftc.gov

Or www.consumer.gov

Internal Revenue Service (IRS):
(Tax Fraud Hotline) 1-800-829-0433
Social Security Administration:
(Fraud Hotline) 1-800-269-0271

www.ssa.gov
FBI: www.fbi.gov

Internet Fraud Complaints:
www.ic3.gov

Postal Inspection Service: (Stolen Mail)
1-877-987-3728
www.usps.com/postalinspectors

Help Us to Help You ...

To learn more
about protecting
yourself from
Identity Theft
and other crimes
contact:

Lake County Sheriff's Office

360 W. Ruby Street
Tavares, FL 32778

Main Office: (352)343-2101
Investigations: (352)343-9529

1

Available on Lake County Sheriff's
website is a copy of an Identity
Theft/Fraud Packet which will assist
an investigator and expedite your
investigation.

Protecting Yourself from ***Identity Theft***



Lake County Sheriff's Office

Peyton C. Grinnell
Sheriff

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has identified Identity theft as the fastest growing white-collar crime in the United States. Today, when your purse or wallet is stolen, the cash inside may not be the only thing that thieves want to steal.

The most valuable items in your wallet may be your Social Security Card, Driver's License, or any other documents containing your personal information. In addition, during the course of a busy day, you share much of this personal information in person, on the telephone, or on the Internet. If your personal information falls into the hands of a criminal, it may be used to steal your identity, using your information to open accounts or services, without your knowledge.

Although it is impossible to guarantee that identity theft will not happen to you, this brochure provides valuable information about how to reduce your chances of becoming a victim.

What is Identity Theft?

In Florida, identity theft occurs when your identifying information has been used with the intent to commit an unlawful offense. For example, when someone uses your name, date of birth, address and/or social security number to establish service accounts (i.e., cable, phone, water, etc.) or lines of credit (i.e., credit cards, vehicle purchases, etc.), for which the criminal has no intention of paying. Unfortunately, many people do not know that they have been a victim of an identity theft until it is too late.

The normal indications are; receipt of mysterious bills for accounts that you are unaware of; phone calls from creditors or financial institutions inquiring about delinquent payments and mail sent to your home from unknown lenders inquiring for additional information on your personal information.

Methods Used to Steal your Information (Identity)

- Thieves rummage through your trash (**Shred your documents!**)
- Thieves steal your mail (**Contact the Postal Inspector**)
- Thieves burglarize your home or vehicle (**Report all burglaries to your local law enforcement agency where the burglary occurred**)
- Thieves will steal your purse or wallet (**Report all thefts to your local law enforcement agency where the theft occurred**)
- Thieves can acquire your information via the Internet (**When online, use only reputable companies with secured sites**).
- Your information is used on applications, such as retail stores, mortgages, or vehicle purchases. Ask the retailer to shred your information after they have completed their transaction.



Prevention

- Keep personal information in a safe place (**Avoid stashing documents in vehicle glove boxes and day-planners**).
- Do not give your social security number over the phone or to unknown person(s), and only give it out when it's required (**Don't be afraid to ask "why" they need your social security number**).
- Shred your personal documents, including bank statements, investment statements, tax notices, etc.
- Order a copy of your credit report from any one of the three credit reporting agencies at least once a year. Review your accounts and information for possible fraud (credit bureau information is located under "Resources" at the back of this brochure).

Correcting the problem if you become a Victim

- Contact the three (3) major credit reporting bureaus to request a Fraud Alert be placed on your report (contact information is located in the "Resource" section of this brochure).
- Contact the fraud unit of the company that sent the bill or whoever appears on your credit report. Request documentation related to this account (i.e., a copy of a contract, service location, signatures, etc.).
- Keep all documentation (i.e., collection notices, credit reports, etc.), since the investigating agency may need it for evidence.
- Contact the law enforcement agency where the crime occurred. If the crime happened in another state, be prepared to fax or mail your evidence to that department.
- If you feel your current valid accounts have been compromised, contact that financial institution and either cancel the account or add "password protection" to the existing valid accounts.

The Lake County Sheriff's Office will take an Identity Theft report should you become the victim of Identity Theft. You should have documentation showing where "someone else" pretended to be you, by using your personal information (such as your credit report, billing for a fraudulent account, copy of fraudulent contract, etc.).

Please note that a report may be taken, but no investigation will be conducted until the required documents are provided.

To assist investigators go to www.lcso.org to download an Identity Theft/Fraud Packet.