



Identity Theft

500,000 – 700,000 victims per year (FBI Statistics)

What constitutes identity theft?

- Thieves opening bank/credit union accounts in your name
- Applications for housing, government benefits, utility services
- Access to existing accounts: credit cards, checking accounts, utility accounts, savings and investment accounts

How does identity theft occur?

- “Dumpster Diving”
- “Shoulder Surfing”
- At home — your mailbox and garbage cans
- At work — security breeches, unprotected employee files
- “Pretexting” — someone pretending to be you to obtain your private records or information
- Roommates and family members
- Group identity theft (businesses, government agencies and schools)
- Theft of computers/laptops

How you can stop identity theft!

- Do not disclose confidential information (bank account numbers, PIN numbers, SS#) to unknown telephone solicitors
- Personal information should be kept in a safe location — not left curbside!
- Shred/burn all discarded mail offers, including credit card solicitations
- Put your wallet on a “diet”
- Avoid disclosing your Social Security number (financial and government services being the exceptions)

The proactive approach #1 — Your credit report

- Free booklet (handout) — Credit Bureaus and Credit Reports
- Order a free report online from www.annualcreditreport.com
- “Fraud alerts” and “file freezes”

Method #2 — Reduce your incoming mail

- Call: 1-888-5 OPTOUT (Eliminate credit card offers)
- Write: Direct Marketing Association, P.O. Box 643 Carmel, NY 10512 (Most mail solicitations will stop) Include your name, address and phone number in your signed letter.

Method #3 – Reduce telemarketing calls

- Federal Trade Commission's National Do Not Call Registry 1-888-382-1222
www.DONOTCALL.GOV

If you are a victim

- Contact your/the financial institution/utility/etc.
- File a report with the local police
- Call the Federal Trade Commission's ID Theft Hotline 1-877-438-4338
- If through the mail, speak with the U.S. Postal Inspectors 1-800-372-8347
- If the case involves a bank or credit union, call the Maine Bureau of Financial Institutions at 1-800-965-5235
- When your credit report has been adversely affected, call the Maine Office of Consumer Credit Regulation at 1-800-332-8529

The Fundamentals of Protecting Your Financial “Health”

- Destroy all unutilized mail offers
- Shred/burn, don't dump personal identity information
- Order your credit reports once a year
- Never provide personal financial information to unknown: U.S. Mail, Internet or telephone solicitors.
- Always ask for “tissue” copies of carbonized credit/debit card receipts
- Check with a government agency before committing to a new financial transaction — unsolicited investment products, unknown loan company or financial institution, or charity.
- If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!