

Preventing

# Identity Theft

Know How to Protect Your Assets





## What is Identity Theft?

Identity theft is when someone commits fraud or other crimes by using your name, Social Security number, bank or credit card account number or other identifying information without your knowledge. It affects the lives of more Americans each year and is the fastest growing white-collar crime\*.

## Identity Theft Facts and Statistics\*

### In 2016 ...

- 15.4 million adults were victims of identity theft
- The number of identity theft victims increased by 16%
- The amount of identity theft losses increased by 4.5%
- The average loss was \$1,039
- Card-not-present (CNP) fraud – in phone and online transactions – increased by 40%
  - Out-of-pocket costs for CNP fraud are double those for point-of-sale (POS) fraud
- Account takeover (ATO) fraud increased by 61%, to \$2.3 billion
  - Social networkers are at 46% higher risk of ATO fraud

## Are You at Risk of Identity Theft?

Understand that anyone can be a victim of identity theft, but some people are at greater risk than others. The following questions are a good place to start assessing your risk.

- Are you careful with your personal financial information?
- Do you keep your antivirus and firewall software up to date on your computers and personal devices?
- Do you give others personal information on the phone, by email or over the internet?
- Do you watch the kind of information you put in the trash?
- Do you take unnecessary chances that may cause you to lose your purse or wallet?
- Do you know how your bank and other businesses use or safeguard the information you give them?



\* Javelin Strategy & Research, "2017 Identity Fraud Study," Feb. 1, 2017.

# How Does Someone Steal an Identity?

## What Information Do Thieves Want?

An identity thief will target your personal information to commit a crime. They are after:

- Social Security number
- Date of birth
- Credit card numbers
- Name and address
- Driver's license number

## How Do Thieves Get the Information?

- Hacking into your computer
- Telephone conversations, often called "Vishing"
- Email scams, often called "Phishing"
- Text messages, often called "SMiShing"
- Going through your trash
- Stealing your wallet or purse
- Stealing your mail
- Loan and credit applications
- Files at a hospital, bank, school and business
- Collecting data from a credit, debit or ATM card using a "skimming" device
- Completing post office change of address form and redirecting mail
- Posing as someone authorized to get your credit report
- Overhearing conversations you have in public



## Assess Your Risk: Identity Theft Test

Determine your identity theft "Identity Quotient" (IQ). If any statement is something you do or happens to you, circle the points in front of the statement.

5 pts	I receive at least one offer of a pre-approved credit card every week and do not shred them
5 pts	I put detailed personal information (date of birth, address, etc.) on social networking sites
5 pts	My driver's license has my Social Security number printed on it
5 pts	I do not have a PO Box or locked, secure mailbox
5 pts	I am required to use my Social Security number as an employee ID or student ID
5 pts	I have my Social Security number and/or driver's license number printed on my personal checks
10 pts	I open emails and attachments and/or send personal information to senders I don't know
10 pts	I carry my Social Security card or Military ID in my wallet
10 pts	I send outgoing mail from my home or drop it in an unlocked box at work
15 pts	I do not shred banking and credit information when I throw it in the trash
20 pts	I carry my insurance card in my wallet or purse with my and/or my spouse's Social Security number as the identification number
20 pts	I do not have updated spyware and antivirus software on my personal computer
20 pts	I have not ordered a copy of my credit report in the last two years
20 pts	I provide my Social Security number when someone asks, without asking questions as to how that information will be safeguarded

Each one of these statements represents a possible opening for an identity thief.

Total your IQ by adding the points you circled.

My IQ totals \_\_\_\_\_ points.

### Understanding Your Score

#### **100 or more points — High Risk**

You are at high risk for identity theft. Consider purchasing a paper shredder, upgrade your antivirus software and become more aware of your document handling behaviors. Start asking why people want your personal financial information.

#### **50-100 points — Average Risk**

Your chances of being victimized are about average. Unfortunately, your chances are higher if you have good credit.

#### **0-50 points — Low Risk**

Congratulations. You have a high identity theft IQ. Keep up the good work and don't let your guard down.

# Minimize Your Risk

## Ways to Prevent Identity Theft

The information a thief could obtain is more than enough to open accounts, make online purchases or take out loans in your name. Take action today. Institute these important recommendations and make them part of your normal routine.

<p><b>Social Security Number</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guard it closely</li> <li>• Before providing your Social Security number, ask if another piece of ID can be used</li> <li>• Never provide your Social Security number to an unverifiable source</li> </ul>	<p><b>Checks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have only your first initial and last name printed on checks</li> <li>• Use work phone number and P.O. Box as address if possible</li> <li>• Use only last four digits of account on “For” line when paying bills</li> <li>• Close inactive accounts</li> </ul>	<p><b>Credit Cards</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor your credit report regularly</li> <li>• Match credit card receipts and statements, and report any discrepancies immediately</li> <li>• Destroy old or expired credit cards</li> <li>• Close inactive accounts</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mail</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put mail on “vacation hold” at the Post Office when traveling</li> <li>• Do not mail bill payments and checks from home mailbox</li> <li>• Check with Post Office if you do not receive mail for two consecutive days</li> </ul>	<p><b>At Home</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a shredder for all documents containing sensitive information</li> <li>• Keep copies of your driver’s license and back and front of credit cards in secure place in case they are stolen</li> <li>• Keep medical records secure</li> <li>• Use security lock on GPS</li> </ul>	<p><b>Telephone</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Say “speaking” never “yes” when asked to verify name on phone</li> <li>• Never give personal information over phone</li> <li>• Instruct children what information they should not give on the phone</li> <li>• Use screen lock on cell phone</li> </ul>
<p><b>Computers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update virus and firewall programs regularly and use secure browsers</li> <li>• Do not click unknown links or open attachments in an unsolicited email</li> <li>• Never use public Wi-Fi to access personal files</li> <li>• Avoid sharing personal information on social media sites</li> </ul>	<p><b>ATMs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look at ATMs closely before using – thieves are attaching skimming devices</li> <li>• Memorize your pin and never write it on the back of your card or keep it in your wallet</li> <li>• Always shield keypad</li> </ul>	<p><b>Passwords</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not use number related to birthdays, anniversaries, Social Security number, phone, names of family members, friends, pets, etc.</li> <li>• Use 8-12 characters with mix of numerals, letters, symbols</li> <li>• Never tell anyone your passwords or write them down</li> <li>• Change passwords regularly</li> </ul>

## Identity Theft Warning Signs

You may be a victim of identity theft if you notice one or more of the following signs:

- Credit card company detects unusual purchases
- Viruses/spyware found on your computer's hard drive
- Collection calls
- Denied credit
- Driver's license revoked
- Discover unauthorized charges on bills or statements
- No received statement for an expected billing cycle

Once you have determined you are a victim of identity theft you must act quickly! It usually takes months for a victim to even become aware of the crime.



## Who to Notify If You're a Victim

As soon as you suspect you are a victim of identity theft, notify:

1. Each of the three national consumer reporting agencies. Ask each agency to place a "fraud alert" on your credit report, and send you a copy of your credit file.
  - **Equifax:** To report fraud: 800.525.6285. To order credit report: 800.685.1111, or [equifax.com/fcra](http://equifax.com/fcra)
  - **Experian:** To report fraud or to order credit report: 888.397.3742, or [experian.com](http://experian.com)
  - **TransUnion:** To report fraud: 800.680.7289. To order credit report: 800.888.4213, or [transunion.com](http://transunion.com)
2. The fraud department at each creditor, bank, or utility/service that provided the identity thief with unauthorized credit, goods or services.
3. Your local police department. Ask the officer to take a report and give you a copy. Sending a copy of your police report to financial institutions can speed up the process of absolving your debts or removing inaccurate information from your credit reports.
4. The FTC, which maintains the Identity Theft Data Clearinghouse – the federal government's centralized identity theft complaint database – and provides information to identity theft victims. You can visit [IdentityTheft.gov](http://IdentityTheft.gov) or call 877.IDTHEFT (438.4338). The FTC collects complaints from identity theft victims and shares their information with law enforcement nationwide. This information may be shared with government agencies, consumer reporting agencies, and companies where the fraud was perpetrated.

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