

Preventative Actions:

Promptly remove mail from your mailbox. Deposit outgoing mail in post office collection mailboxes or at your local post office. Do not leave in unsecured mail receptacles. Consider obtaining a locking mailbox.

Never give personal information over the telephone (social security number, date of birth, mother's maiden name, credit card number, or bank PIN code) unless you initiated the phone call. Don't be fooled by mail, telephone, or e-mail solicitations disguised as promotions offering prizes in order to obtain your personal information.

Shred pre-approved credit applications, credit card receipts, bills, and other financial information. This will deter people who rummage through trash in search of documents with your personal information.

Never leave receipts at bank machines, bank counters, trash receptacles, or unattended gasoline pumps. Keep track of all your receipts. Check all of your bank and credit card statements for fraudulent activity.

Avoid keeping your passwords and PINs in your purse or wallet.

Report lost or stolen credit cards and checks immediately. If you do not receive replacement credit cards, contact the issuer.

Order your credit report from the three credit bureaus at least once a year to check for fraudulent activity or other discrepancies. (Free once a year from the FTC)

Local Law Enforcement Agencies:

CHP	(707) 588-1400
Cloverdale Police	(707) 894-2150
Cotati Police	(707) 792-4611
Healdsburg Police	(707) 431-3377
Petaluma Police	(707) 778-4372
Rohnert Park Public Safety	(707) 584-2600
Santa Rosa Police	(707) 543-3600
Santa Rosa Junior College PD	(707) 527-1000
Sebastopol Police	(707) 829-4400
Sonoma Police	(707) 996-3602
Sonoma County Sheriff	(707) 565-2650
Sonoma State University Police Services	(707) 664-2143
Windsor Police	(707) 838-1234

INFORMATIONAL WEB SITES

Sonoma County District Attorney
(707) 565-2311
www.sonoma-county.org/da/index.htm

Sonoma County Sheriff's Office
(707) 565-2650
www.sonomasheriff.org

IDENTITY THEFT

SONOMA COUNTY



DISTRICT ATTORNEY

IDENTITY THEFT involves acquiring key pieces of someone's identifying information, such as name, address, date of birth, social security number and mother's maiden name, in order to impersonate them. This information enables the identity thief to commit numerous forms of fraud which include taking over the victim's financial accounts, opening new bank accounts, purchasing automobiles, applying for loans, credit cards and social security benefits, renting apartments, and establishing services with utility and phone companies.

How Does Identity Theft Occur?

Theft of wallet/purse containing your ID, credit or bank cards.

Theft of mail (bank/credit card statements; pre-approved credit applications, etc.)

Change of address forms can be completed by a thief using your information.

Personal data can be retrieved from your trash cans.

Credit reports or personal information can be obtained by a thief posing as a landlord or employer.

If you've been burglarized, personal information can be used by a thief.

Personal information can be bought from "inside sources" (Internet).

At restaurants, give credit card slips directly to a business employee, do not leave receipts on counters or tables.

Internet Precautions

Use caution when disclosing checking account numbers, credit card numbers or other personal financial data on any Web site or on-line service location.

Beware of "phishing" schemes – thieves pretending to be financial institutions or other companies that send spam or obtain your personal information.

Keep your passwords and log-in information secret. If you need to write them down, keep them in a safe place.

What To Do If You Become a Victim of Identity Theft

- Contact the police agency where you reside. Use the agency's non-emergency number.
- Contact one of the three credit bureaus' fraud units to report that you have been a victim of identity theft. The credit bureau you contact is required to alert the other two credit bureaus.
- Ask to have a "Fraud Alert/Victim Impact" statement placed in your credit file asking that creditors call you before opening any new accounts.

Credit Reporting Agencies

TransUnion www.transunion.com
P.O. Box 6790
Fullerton, CA 92834 (800) 680-7289

Experian www.experian.com
P.O. Box 1017
Allen, TX 75013 (888) 397-3742

Equifax www.Equifax.com
P.O. Box 740256
Atlanta, GA 30374

Contact all your banks and creditors to inform them of the problem so that they can flag your accounts to detect unusual activity.

Keep records of all your contacts. Consider maintaining a folder to track the dates you contacted creditors and other agencies. Keep records of the person you spoke to on the telephone and the date and time you called.

Notify the US Postal Inspector if your mail has been tampered with or stolen.

US Postal Inspection Service

www.usps.gov/postalinspectors

Contact the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). The FTC is the federal clearing house for complaints by victims of identity theft. The FTC helps victims by providing information to help resolve financial and other problems that could result from identity theft.

Federal Trade Commission

(877) ID THEFT or (877) 438-4338

www.ftc.gov

Contact the DMV to make sure someone has not attempted to obtain a false driver's license or Identification Card in your name.

DMV (866) 658-5758

Contact the **Social Security Administration** to make sure someone does not attempt to apply for benefits using your social security number. Their fraud hotline is (800) 269-0271.

Contact the Identity Theft Council for additional assistance.

Identity Theft Council

(888) 771-0767

www.identitytheftcouncil.org