



Avoiding Identity Theft

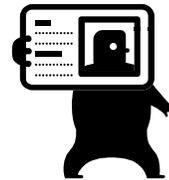
UNIVERSITY PARK POLICE DEPARTMENT CRIME PREVENTION

WHAT IS IDENTITY THEFT?

Identity theft occurs when someone uses your identifying information without your knowledge and/or consent to commit fraud or other crimes. It may involve use of your name, Social Security Number, credit card, driver's license, passport, etc. The Federal Trade Commission estimates as many as 9 million Americans have their identities stolen each year.

How do thieves get the information?

- They steal wallets, purses, mail containing checks or pre-approved credit cards.
- They bribe people who have legitimate access to the information to steal it for them.
- They may rummage through trash looking for papers you have thrown away that have credit card numbers, Social Security Numbers, or other personal identifiers.
- They may look over your shoulder when you are entering your information at the ATM.
- They may change your address to receive your mail at their location in order to get credit card or billing information.
- They may call you and pretend to be your financial or credit card company, or a government entity that needs your personal information.
- They may steal your card information while you are conducting a legitimate transaction in a restaurant or business.
- The possible ways to obtain your information continue to grow with advances in technology and with the inventiveness of the thief.



SOME SUGGESTIONS . . .



- Use a cross cut shredder to destroy old credit card statements, pre-approved credit cards, medical billing information, etc. before you toss it in the trash.
- Do not put checks in the mail from your home address, drop them in a U.S. Post Office mailbox.
- Don't leave mail sitting in your mailbox overnight or extended periods of time.
- Check your bank statements and credit card bills closely. Follow-up on any questionable entries as soon as possible.
- Use anti-spyware and anti-virus software on your computers.
- Immediately report lost or stolen credit and debit cards.

CLOSELY GUARD THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION . . .

- Social Security Number
- Your banking and other financial information
- Credit card numbers
- Date of birth
- Passwords and PIN numbers
- Driver's license number

**REPORT SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY & SUSPICIOUS PEOPLE
TO THE POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**Non-Emergency — 214 363-3000
Emergency — 911**