

Identity theft

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What is identity theft?



Identity theft is a crime where a thief steals your personal information to commit fraud

- The identity thief can use your information to fraudulently apply for credit, file taxes, or get medical services
- These acts damage your credit status and cost you time and money
- You may not know that you are the victim of identity theft until you experience the financial consequences

Spotting identity theft

You may be the victim of identity theft if you experience any of the following

- Withdrawals from your bank account you can't explain
- Don't receive expected bills or other mail
- Your checks are refused by merchants
- Debt collectors call about debts that aren't yours
- There are unfamiliar accounts or charges on your credit report
- Receive medical bills for services you didn't use
- Medical claims are rejected by your health plan for legitimate expenses because records show you've reached your benefits limit
- Your health plan won't cover you because your records show a condition you don't have
- You receive notification from the IRS that more than one tax return was filed in your name, or that you have income from an employer you don't work for
- You get a notice that your information was compromised by a data breach
- You get account notices from a company you do not do business or have an account with
- Denials for loan applications

What are your rights?



If your identity is stolen, you have the right to:

- Create an identity theft report
- Place a one-year fraud alert on your credit report
- Place a seven-year extended fraud alert on your credit report
- Get free copies of your credit report
- Get fraudulent information removed (or “blocked”) from your credit report
- Dispute fraudulent or inaccurate information on your credit report
- Stop creditors and debt collectors from reporting fraudulent accounts
- Get copies of documents related to the identity theft
- Stop debt collectors from contacting you

What if my identity is stolen?



- **Alert a credit reporting agency**
 - Place a fraud alert (free)
 - Ask them to contact the other 2 agencies on your behalf
 - Alert stays on your credit report for 90 days
- **Get copies of your free credit report from each of the agencies**
 - Contact the fraud department at each of the companies with impacted accounts
 - Follow up in writing & keep copies
- **Create an Identity Theft Report**
 - FTC Identity Theft Affidavit (www.identitytheft.gov/#/)
 - Police Report

If you're the victim of identity theft

Immediately contact:

- The Federal Trade Commission – file a report and get guidance
- Your local police department – file a report
- Any businesses where the identity thief fraudulently conducted a transaction in your name
- The three major credit bureaus – inform them of identity theft

Equifax

- 800-685-1111
- Equifax.com

Experian

- 888-397-3742
- Experian.com

TransUnion

- 800-916-8800
- TransUnion.com

Source: www.justice.gov/criminal-fraud/identity-theft/identity-theft-quiz

Special considerations

Tax identity theft

- Respond promptly to correspondence from the IRS, if contacted
- Contact the IRS if you suspect you are the victim of fraud and complete Form 14039
- Contact your state tax agency to determine what steps you need to take
- <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/how-irs-id-theft-victim-assistance-works>

Medical identity theft

- Contact your health insurance provider

Sources: <https://www.usa.gov/identity-theft#item-208988>, <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/taxpayer-guide-to-identity-theft>

Losses are limited

You have limited liability for fraudulent debts caused by identity theft

- Under most state laws, you're not responsible for any debt incurred on fraudulent new accounts opened in your name without your permission
- Under federal law, the amount you have to pay for unauthorized use of your credit card is limited to \$50. If you report the loss to the credit card company before your credit card is used by a thief, you aren't responsible for any unauthorized charges.
- If someone makes unauthorized debits to your bank or credit union account using your debit card number (not your card), you aren't responsible – if you report the problem within 60 days after they send your account statement showing the unauthorized debits
- Most state laws limit your liability for fraudulent checks issued on your bank or credit union account if you notify the bank or credit union promptly

ATM and debit card losses

If you report your debit card as lost:	Your maximum loss is:
Before any authorized charges are made	\$0
Within 2 days after you learn about the loss or theft	\$50
More than 2 business days after you learn about the loss or theft, but less than 60 calendar days after your statement is sent to you	\$500
More than 60 calendar days after your statement is sent to you	Possibly unlimited

Preventing identity theft

Secure your data

- Secure your social security number
- Store personal info in a safe place
- Don't share personal info or PIN
- Collect mail promptly
- Pay attention to your billing cycles
- Review your credit card and bank statements
- Shred receipts, credit card offers, account statements, expired cards, personal or medical information

Secure your electronics

- Be cautious when using public WiFi
- Create complex passwords & turn on two-factor authentication
- Don't let others use your computer and lock it when you aren't using it
- Check your outbound email for unfamiliar sent emails. Ensure no one is using your email
- Use your phone's security features
- Update computer software, passwords, and security questions
- Online shopping make sure it is secure

Monitor your credit report

- Order your credit report once a year and review
- Freeze your credit for free

Get a copy of your credit report

The law allows you to order one free copy of your credit report from each of the nationwide credit reporting companies every 12 months. You may order your reports from each credit reporting company at the same time, or you can order your report from each company one at a time.



To order

- annualcreditreport.com
- 1-877-322-8228
- Or complete the Annual Credit Report Request Form and mail to:
Annual Credit Report Request Service
P.O. Box 105281
Atlanta GA 30348-5281



Questions?

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