

How to Respond After Identity Theft Occurs

Article by: Gary Cain

Identity theft has become one of the most frequently reported crimes. But, maybe you are asking yourself: What is identity theft? I am glad you asked.

Identity theft is the wrongful use of your name, birth date, social security number as well as financial records and banking information.

An identity thief obtains this information by going through your trash, or by pretending to be a bank officer, or government official, or by creating a fake web site that looks similar to your on-line banking web site, your on-line auction web site (ebay, for example), or your on-line shopping web site (yahoo shopping, for instance).

This personal information is used to secure credit cards, bank loans, or to make furniture, and/or electronic goods purchases in YOUR name.

However, when identity theft occurs, you have certain rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA). In order to effectively respond to suspected identity theft you should or can:

(1) Place a fraud alert in one of the three consumer reporting agencies and that agency will notify the other two consumer reporting agencies regarding your fraud alert.

The agencies are :

* Equifax at 1-800-525-6285, or on the Internet at www.equifax.com

* TransUnion at 1-800-397-3742, or on the Internet at www.transunion.com

* Experian at 1-800-680-7289, or www.experian.com

(2) Obtain a copy of the identity theft report from a federal, state, or local police agency such as the FBI, State Department of Justice, or Sheriff's office. You can find more specific information pertaining to the identity theft report at www.consumer.gov/idtheft.

(3) Put an initial theft alert in your consumer report file that will be valid for 90 days.

Yet, you can place an extended alert in your consumer report file that will remain valid for 7 years - if you also provide a copy of the identity theft report.

(4) Receive -free- copies of the information in your consumer report file from each of the 3 consumer reporting agencies.

The extended alert gives you the right to receive 2 -free- copies in a 1-year period to help you remain aware of any fraudulent accounts open in your name.

(5) Obtain copies of applications and similar documents from creditors, banks, and other businesses used to open fraudulent accounts - but you must make a written request to the addresses of these businesses.

(6) Get information about debts as a result of identity theft from a debt collector. You may request the name of the creditor and the amount of the outstanding debt.

(7) Have a credit reporting agency block specific information in your consumer file that was caused by identity theft. It is important to remember that you must provide a copy of the identity theft report mentioned in item 2 above.

(8) Prevent businesses from sending identity theft transactions to a consumer reporting agency by the making a written request that includes a copy of the identity theft report.

Please note that all of your communication should be sent by certified mail with a return receipt requested in order to confirm receipt of your correspondence.

Besides identity theft, there are an ever-growing rash of Internet scams, schemes, and frauds committed by -bad people- that can be effectively dealt with if you have the right know-how. Fortunately, such a source of information is available in the form of an ebook that covers the complete range of these crimes and scams.

The name of this ebook is Internet Self Defense: How to Protect Yourself While Online. Check this web site out now [HERE](http://www.dollarsforever.com).(C) 2005 Dollarsforever.com -- All rights reserved worldwide

Gary Cain is a business teacher and Internet marketer. He is the author of Stop the Grammar! as well as Internet Self Defense the only Internet book of its kind designed to help fight spam, fraud, information theft, and clone web sites.

Both of these books can be found at <http://www.dollarsforever.com>

Subscribe to Gary's straight forward, easy-to-understand Dollarsforever Ezine about financial literacy, saving, investing, and earning money.

***Webmasters: You may post this information on your web site, but you must keep this -ownership- box and the information contained herein unchanged.