

# Identity Theft Prevention Measures

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Identity theft, one of the most insidious forms of white-collar crime, is a federal crime under the Identity Theft and Assumption Deterrence Act. It occurs when charlatans steal your personal and/or financial information to use your credit accounts, tap your bank accounts, get new credit in your name, file fraudulent tax returns, get cell phones in your name, access your insurance benefits, and so on. When someone steals your personal and financial information, your life may become a living hell, particularly if you don't realize what has happened right away and the imposter has siphoned off funds using your name. This makes adopting strategies for identity theft prevention all the more essential. The steps to take for prevention are really simple.

Identity theft crimes make headlines more and more every day. You hear about them on the news or read about them in the papers. The Federal Trade Commission, the leading governmental agency addressing the problem of identity fraud, has reported a dramatic increase in the incidence of this crime. Recently, FTC released a survey that revealed identity fraud claimed a whopping 27.3 million victims over the past five years and result in over \$53 billion annual losses to businesses and financial institutions. Accurate and up-to-date information is the most critical element in any identity theft prevention measure. For this reason, Federal Trade Commission launched a website [annualcreditreport.com](http://annualcreditreport.com) where all consumers are eligible for a free copy of their credit reports. By getting a free copy of your credit report you should be able to spot suspicious activity.

The old adage "Prevention is better than cure", is very much applicable for identity theft prevention. While state governments, local and federal law enforcement agencies, and private organizations are taking new steps to minimize this threat, it is also crucially important for citizens to take responsibility for protecting their personal information. As an identity theft prevention measure, individuals can hire credit-monitoring services that alert them when there are changes in their credit report. Proper disposal of personal information and other sensitive material is a vital identity theft prevention technique. This could be accomplished by shredding documents. Do not allow intact documents to be thrown in garbage. To thwart phishing attacks, do not reply or click on links in the email that asks you for your account or billing information. Instead, contact the company cited in the email by telephone or by website you know to be genuine, to verify the contents.

Keith Londrie II is a well known author. For more information on Identity Theft, please visit [Identity Theft](http://www.identitytheft.com) for a wealth of information. You may also want to visit keith's own web site at <http://keithlondrie.com/>