

# Protecting Yourself Against Identity Theft

---

*Article by: Jason Deines*

You've probably seen the statistics on identity theft that say, "500,000 – 700,000 Americans fall victim to identity theft each year." Protecting one's self against identity theft has become a very popular topic. Protecting yourself from falling victim to identity theft does not take much more than common sense and paying attention to what you are doing. There is no sure fire way to completely protect yourself but there are a number of things you can do to reduce the chances of being a victim of identity theft.

The most important step you can take to protect yourself from identity theft is to keep your personal information private. Don't share your social security number, driver's license number, mother's maiden name, etc. with individuals or companies that you are unfamiliar with. Especially, don't give out personal information through email or the Internet unless you are certain you are on a secure server. To identify whether a server is secure, look at the bottom of the navigation bar for a lock symbol. There should also be other signs that you are on a secure server, for example a message stating so or "https" in the URL.

Along with not giving out your personal information it is also important to know who your friends are. Believe it or not but identity theft victims often times know the thief. It could be a family member, someone that has been in your home, a friend, baby sitter, or even your land lord. Keep your personal information along with your financial information in a safe and secure place where others don't have easy access to it.

Watch your mail for any suspicious activity. Are you receiving your bills on time each month? If you notice that you are missing a bill or your bills are no longer being delivered this could mean someone has changed your address to gain access to your personal information. Call your service or financial provider immediately to see if there have been any changes made to your account. When paying your bills each month go a little out of your way and drop off your bills in a secure blue USPS mail box or deliver them directly to the post office.

When disposing of personal information, financial statements, or any paperwork that has account numbers on it, use a shredder. Don't assume people will not dig through your trash because it is disgusting. People do and they will to get your personal information.

These are but a few tips in protecting yourself from identity theft. Monitor your credit report regularly and watch for any suspicious activity. The sooner you are able to detect the signs of identity theft the less the damage will be. If you do fall victim to identity theft report it immediately. Jason Deines writes for an informational website, MyInfoSource.biz. Visit MyInfoSource for additional information on Identity Theft