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# What is Identity Theft?

Identity theft is stealing, selling, and/or using an individual's:

- · Birth Certificate
- Death Certificate · Driver's License
- Credit
- · Financial information
- · Medical / health insurance information

# How Does it Occur?

The information can be obtained by:

- Physical theft
- · Theft by trickery
- · Electronic theft
- · Procedural flaws / data breaches

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# Physical Theft

Theft of purse/briefcase from desk, cart or car
 Dumpster diving

Theft by a person invited into the home

Theft of mail



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# **Prevention of Physical Theft**

- · Carry your wallet in your front pocket
- · Carry a purse by its strap
- · Always use a shredder
- All personal information should be kept in a drawer out of sight and under lock and key if possible
- Never put checks into rural route mailboxes
- Use GEL pens to write checks
- Pay bills on-line
- Opt-out of pre-authorized credit applications: 888-5-OPTOUT, or optoutprescreen.com

# **Theft by Trickery**

- · Credit card scanner · Fake ATM / shoulder surfing
- Phishing
- Smishing

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# Prevention of Theft by Trickery

- · Do not give anyone your Social Security number, other than people who truly need it
- Try to keep your credit or debit card in sight when paying for items
- · Use ATMs with either your bank's logo or an ATM attached to a building
- · Shield your PIN number as best as possible from someone behind you · Never respond online to e-mail from a financial institution
- Never respond to a text from a financial institution by clicking on "reply"

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### **Prevention of Electronic Theft**

- · Review your credit report every year: annualcreditreport.com
- Review your junk mail
- $\circ\,$  Do not open any mail from addresses you don't recognize
- Keep virus, spyware detectors and logger detectors up to date and use them to regular monitor your computers
   Seek banking institutions that use two factor identification
- Use chipped credit and debit cards

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### Prevention (continued)

- · Use cash, instead of a debit card
- $\circ\,$  Use a reliable smartphone app, e.g.: Apple Pay, Google Wallet, PayPal
- $\circ\,$  Do not use credit cards online, unless you see the padlock icon in the URL address bar
- Never use your debit card online
- Use two factor identification
- Use alpha numeric passwords
- $\circ\,$  Do not post to your social networking site while on vacation

• Use a VPN

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#### **Procedural Flaws / Data Breaches**

- Many data storage sites are under attack by hackers 24/7
- · Some of these are sites that require our personal information
- Job applications
  Medical purposes
- Medical purposes
- Credit and banking institutions
- $\circ\,$  We have little control over these sites
- $\circ\,$  They are required to inform you of a breach
- $\circ\,$  Generally, they provide a monitoring program
- $\circ\,$  You should place a security freeze on your credit report
- $\,\circ\,$  There may be a charge for this, it varies state to state



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# **IRS Theft Prevention**

- Do not respond to threats from individuals claiming to be with the IRS, when made over the phone or by any electronic means
- · File your return early and track it often

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# **Red Flags**

- · Financial statements with charges / transactions that you did not make
- Missing mail
- · An increase in junk e-mail; from strange email addresses
- $\,\circ\,$  You have a problem establishing your identity at a medical facility or government agency
- · You are contacted by debt collectors on accounts unknown to you

# What To Do if Your Identity is Stolen?

• Visit:

- Federal Trade Commission website: identitytheft.gov
  Identity Theft Resource Center: idtheftcenter.org
- · Contact your local police department
- $\circ\,$  Get a copy of your police report and make copies of it
- · Notify the security office of the financial services company of the affected account
- Close the affected account
- · Place a security alert on your credit report
- · Place a "credit freeze" on your credit

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# Checklist

- · Keep your wallet and purse secure
- · Review all financial accounts for charges and debits
- · Review your computer firewall and antivirus software
- · Review personal computer procedures with children
- · Opt-out of preauthorized credit applications
- · Obtain a free copy of your credit report

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#### Checklist (continued)

- · Review all financial accounts, at least monthly
- · Secure or shred all financial documents
- · Use two party identification where available
- · Do not use unsecured mail boxes to mail checks or pay bills
- · Be careful with information posted on your social network
- · Do not respond to text messages from financial institutions

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# Checklist (continued)

- $\circ\,$  Follow instructions from financial, private or government institutions, when you are notified of a security breach
- · Place a "security alert" on your credit reports
- Temporary
- Permanent
- · Place a "credit freeze" on your credit report
- · Consider credit monitoring

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#### Resources

- · Federal Trade Commission website: identitytheft.gov
- · Identity Theft Resource Center: idtheftcenter.org
- · Free Credit Report: annualcreditreport.com
- · Mail Opt-Out: 1-888-5-OPT-OUT or visit optoutprescreen.com
- · Credit reporting agencies: experian.com
- equifax.com
  transunion.com
- · Consumer Financial Protection Bureau: consumerfinance.gov







