



Identity Theft

Identity theft is the fastest growing crime in Canada!

*Losses from identity theft exceed
\$16 billion dollars per year!*



IDENTITY THEFT

Identity theft is a form of fraud that occurs when a dishonest person gets a hold of your personal, banking, or credit card information and uses it to their advantage to make purchases, obtain funds, open a bank account, obtain credit cards, or otherwise take advantage of your credit rating.

Identity thieves are increasingly using personal information displayed on social media sites and opportunities presented by smartphones to access the information that they need.

Identity theft can ruin your credit rating. In order to reduce the chances that you will become a victim of identity theft, follow these do's and don'ts.

DO

- be extremely careful before you decide to give out personal information or post it on social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Google or LinkedIn,
- treat your social insurance card and birth certificate as you would any valuable and store it in a safe place under lock and key,
- carry only the credit cards you need and cancel the ones you don't,
- watch how salespeople swipe your debit/credit card and make sure that a second machine is never used,
- take precautions when performing online transactions, be sure the site is secure, a privacy policy is posted and the company is known to be reputable,

- carefully check your monthly statements for any unauthorized or missing transactions,
- call the credit card company immediately if your bills don't arrive or you don't receive a new credit card that you applied for,
- buy a shredder and use it to shred your financial statements, personal information and credit cards after they expire,
- have your mail picked up by a trusted neighbour or go to your local post office (with identification) and ask for Canada Post's "hold mail" service, if you are going away,
- watch for people looking over your shoulder when using your personal identification number (pin) and avoid writing this number down or storing it in your wallet,
- protect your personal computer and smartphone devices with a password and a firewall, keep your operating systems updated, and change your passwords regularly,
- beware of e-mail messages and promotions that ask for personal information,
- keep wi-fi and bluetooth off when you're not using them and use encryption where available,
- conduct an annual credit check on yourself through the two national credit reporting agencies:
Equifax Canada:
..... 1-800-465-7166
..... www.equifax.ca

TransUnion of Canada:
..... 1-800-663-9980
..... www.transunion.ca

- complete the Identity Theft Action Plan on the back of this fact sheet; and,
- visit the Ministry of Consumer & Business Services website at: www.cbs.gov.on.ca for further information.

DON'T

- carry your social insurance card and birth certificate on your person unless absolutely necessary,
- leave credit card receipts behind or throw out financial or personal information without first making it unreadable,
- use your birth date or house address number for your pin number,
- give out your phone number, address, credit card number or SIN number on the internet,
- put personal information including photos, on your website, and,
- pay bills on public wi-fi hotspots.

A SAFER COMMUNITY TOGETHER

PEEL REGIONAL POLICE

Crime Prevention Services

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Fax 905-456-5910
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