

Identify Theft

A Resource Guide for Victims

The crime of identity theft is one of the quickest growing crimes in history. The government statistics are staggering. The largest credit bureaus report millions of losses every year. In 2019, 14.4 million consumers became victims of identity fraud, or approximately 1 in 15 people.¹

In 1999, the Texas Penal Code section 32.51 Fraudulent Use or Possession of Identifying Information was enacted, making it illegal for a person to obtain your personal information or biometric data, and attempt to use it to obtain goods, services, credit or medical information.

The following is a guide for victims and potential victims. This guide has been provided to you, courtesy of the Burleson Police Department.

Tips for Prevention:

- Don't carry your social security card on you, lock it in a fire safe at your residence.
- Be careful with receipts, take them with you and shred them at your residence, or hold them for a paper-shredding event.
- Use the post office instead of leaving mail in your mailbox.
- Get a locking mailbox, or PO Box.
- Shred anything with your name, address, date of birth, Social Security number or any credit applications.
- Carefully review all statements, including bank, cable, cellular phone, etc.
- Request your credit report, at a minimum annually.
 - ❖ Federal Law provides you to request your credit report one time, annually, for free.
- If you don't receive your mail for more than a couple of days, check with the post office to see if there has been a change of address.
- If statements are late, call creditors to see if a change of address has been filed.
- Do not have your driver's license or Social Security number printed on your checks.
- Do not release personal information over the phone or internet.
- Order your Social Security benefits and earnings statement yearly.
- Opt out of receiving prescreened offers of credit and insurance.
 - ❖ This can be accomplished at www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0262-stopping-unsolicited-mail-phone-calls-and-email
 - ❖ You can opt out for 5 years or permanently
- Do not carry your PIN or passwords with you.
 - ❖ Rather put these PINS and passwords in a secured app on your phone for easy, but secure, access.
- Never have new checks mailed to you; pick them up from the bank.

What to do if it happens to you:

- Keep a log of all contacts. Get names, dates and times.
- Call the fraud units of the three credit bureaus – Request an alert be placed on your record and ascertain the expiration of the alert. Also request a victims statement be placed on your account.
 - ❖ Equifax (1-888-525-6285 or Equifax.com),
 - ❖ Experian (1-888-397-3742 or Experian.com),

- ❖ Tran Union (1-833-395-6938 or transunion.com/fraud-victim-resource/fraud-victim-checklist)
- Contact all creditors, by phone and in writing, where fraudulent use has occurred.
- Carefully review incoming statements for fraudulent use.
- Report the crime to the local police having jurisdiction over the crime and provide as much documentation as possible.
 - ❖ The Burleson Police Department will not make it's citizens go to the city where the fraud occurred. We will take the report and forward the case to that jurisdiction if needed.
- Check with your bank(s) in the event your checks were stolen. Look for fraudulent use or fraudulent accounts you did not open.
- Notify your utilities companies and ascertain if any new accounts have been opened in your name.
- In the event your driver's license or identification were stolen, go to the DMV and request a new number. (Restrictions apply)
 - ❖ You will need file a police report, and take a copy of the report with you. This may be done by completing an open records request with the Burleson Police at the Police Department itself or on-line.
 - ❖ The DMV personnel will then determine if it is necessary to issue a new number when reviewing your case.
- If your Social Security number (SSN) is being used, call the Social Security Administration and inquire into getting a new SSN issued. (Restrictions apply)
- If you suspect your mail is being stolen, call the post office and inquire if a change of address has been filed.
- Be prepared to back up everything in writing and by notarizing documents.

Social Security Administration

- To order statement: 1-800-772-1213 or Social Security Administration Data Operations, P.O. Box 7004, Wilkes Barre, PA 18767
- To report fraudulent use: 1-800-269-0271



Burleson Police Department
 1161 SW Wilshire Blvd
 817-426-9903

¹ Identity Force - <https://www.identityforce.com/blog/identity-theft-odds-identity-theft-statistics#:~:text=By%20the%20Numbers&text=In%202019%2C%2014.4%20million%20consumers,over%2C%20have%20experienced%20identity%20theft>