

Identity Theft Prevention Tips

The LAPD suggests the following crime prevention techniques to avoid becoming a victim of Identity Theft:

- To minimize the amount of information an identity thief can steal, do not carry extra credit cards, a social security card, birth certificate or passport in your wallet or purse, except when needed.
- To reduce the amount of personal information that is in circulation consider the following:
- Remove your name from the marketing lists of the three major credit reporting bureaus, i.e., [Equifax](#), [Experian](#) (formerly TRW) and [Trans Union](#). This will limit the number of pre-approved offers of credit that you receive. These offers, if thrown away in the trash, are potential targets of identity thieves who will use them to order credit cards using your identity.
- Sign up for the [Direct Marketing Association Mail Preference Service and the Telephone Preference Service](#). By doing this, your name is added to computerized name deletion lists used by nationwide marketers.
- Have your name and address removed from telephone books and reverse directories.
- Install a locked mailbox at your residence or business to reduce mail theft or use a post office box.
- When you order new checks, do not have them sent to your home address. Have them sent to a post office box or arrange to pick them up at your bank.
- When you pay bills, do not place the envelopes containing your checks in your home mailbox for the letter carrier to pick up. If stolen, your checks can be altered and cashed by identity thieves. It is best to mail your checks and other sensitive mail at the post office rather than your home or neighborhood mailbox. Write checks with a fine-point permanent marker.
- Pay bills with an electronic bill payment service.
- Reduce the number of credit cards you actively use to a bare minimum. Carry only one or two credit cards in your wallet. Cancel all unused credit card accounts. Even though you do not use these accounts, account numbers are recorded in your credit report along with other data that can be used by identity thieves.
- Never give out your credit card number or other personal information over the telephone, unless you have a trusted business relationship with the person or company and you have initiated the telephone call.
- Order your credit report once a year from each of the three major credit bureaus to check for inaccuracies and fraudulent use of your accounts. Make sure that you recognize every line of information established in your file.
- Always take credit card receipts with you. Never throw them in a public trash container.
- Watch the mail when you expect a new or reissued credit card to arrive. Contact the issuer if the card does not arrive.
- Memorize all your passwords. Do not record them on anything in your wallet or purse.
- Protect your social security number. Release it only when absolutely necessary (tax forms, employment records, most banking, stock and property transactions). The social security number is the key to your credit and bank accounts and is a prime target of identity thieves.
- Do not have your social security number printed on your checks. Do not let merchants write your social security number on your checks because of the risk of fraud.
- Order your [Social Security Earnings and Benefits Statement](#) once a year to check for fraud.
- Carefully review your credit card statements for unauthorized use.
- Do not throw pre-approved credit offers in the trash or in a recycling container without first shredding them. The discarded credit offers can be used by identity thieves to order credit cards in your name and to have the credit cards mailed to their address.
- Do the same with other sensitive information like credit card receipts. Home shredders can be purchased at many office supply stores.
- When you fill out loan applications, find out how the company disposes of them. If you are not convinced that they store them in locked files and/or shred them take your business elsewhere. Some car dealerships, department stores, car rental agencies, and video stores have been known to be careless with customer applications.

Basic Car 8A35, Westside Pavilion/ Rancho Park

Senior Lead Officer Munif Ali

Perimeter: Santa Monica Boulevard (N), Santa Monica Freeway (S), San Diego Freeway (W), and Motor Avenue (E).

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all a very happy New Year.

Protect your vehicle license plates and the registration tabs. Numerous license tabs are being stolen and resold because proof of insurance is required in order to apply for current registration.

- Check your license plate occasionally to ensure your current year license tab is attached
- If you have a build up of past year tabs remove them prior to adding the current year
- Once you attach the current sticker - slice an X or diagonal lines, with a sharp razor blade, through the year tab so the sticker will not come apart in one piece
- A sturdy metal frame bolted to the license plate will discourage thieves from cutting the corner off your license plate in order to steal the year sticker
- Be aware of people loitering near the rear of vehicles
- Call the police if you suspect criminal activity

I am very interested in forming block clubs, neighborhood and apartment watches, please give me at a call to find out how you can get started. These programs are very important in forming a safe and informed community, so I'll try to do my part.