

What is Identity Theft?

A person commits identity theft if s(he):

1. Knowingly and with intent to deceive or defraud:
2. Obtains, possesses, transfers, uses, or attempts to obtain, transfer or use,
3. One or more means of identification not lawfully issued for his/her use.

Why is this important?

- As of June 2013, There were an average of 11,571,900 identity thefts in the US annually – Department of Justice
- The 2010 census population of Missouri - 5,988,927
- There is 1 victim every 3 seconds
- Identity theft cost victims \$21 Billion annually
- Who Pays for This? The banks? The Merchants? NO... WE ALL PAY FOR IT through HIGHER FEES AND COSTS

Who Are Targets

- Seniors have worked their entire lives and have usually amassed their retirement nest eggs
- People with lower than average technological knowledge
- Family Members
- Neighbors
- Co-Workers
- Most importantly.....**EVERYONE IS A TARGET!!!!**

ID Theft Techniques

- Shoulder surfing – Watching you from another location enter personal information into an ATM or payment swipe
- Dumpster Diving- Going through your discarded mail, CC receipts, Preapproved CC applications, old bank statements etc...

- Electronic SPAM/Malware
- Phishing Scams- i.e. Gypsy/Fortune Teller Method
- With enough identifying information about an individual, a criminal can take over that individual's identity to conduct a wide range of crimes:
- False applications for loans and credit cards
- Fraudulent withdraws from bank accounts
- Change of address so bills come to them to hide their criminal activity
- Using someone else's information to turn on utilities

Prevention Ideas

- Tell retailers when shopping that you want the Smart Chip Technology-(Europe has seen a 70% decrease in Credit Card Fraud since going to the Smart Chip)
- Ask your bank to put customer's photographs on the debit/credit card similar to Bank of America
- Shred important documents
- Keep PIN numbers separate: don't have pin numbers as 1234, attached to your card, or write on your card
- Don't assume retailers and banks are looking out for you
- Avoid public hot-spots for financial transactions
- Check your accounts regularly!!!!!!
- **BE PROACTIVE!!!!**

Check your credit score

- Experian
- Equifax
- Trans Union
- www.annualcreditreport.com

- Takes about 10 minutes
- No need for credit card information
- Free credit report once a year

During Tax Season

- File as early as possible- Once a return has been filed under a specific SSN, the IRS won't allow a second return to be filed.
- If you can't file, get a PIN-Filing early may not be feasible. If not, go to IRS.gov and get your electronic filing PIN number. Without that PIN, no one can electronically file your taxes.
- Take your returns to the post office. If you aren't e-filing, hand your returns directly to a postal worker. Don't leave your tax return in your mailbox on April 14th with the flag up.
- Avoid tax scams. Do not give your personal information to anyone unless you initiate the contact and are sure of the recipient.
- SHRED, SHRED, SHRED

Credit / Debit Cards

If you suspect your debit card has been lost or stolen, call the card issuer immediately. While federal law limits your liability for a lost or stolen credit card to \$50, your liability for unauthorized use of your ATM or debit card can be much greater, depending on how quickly you report the loss. If you report a debit card missing before it is used, you are not responsible for any unauthorized withdrawals. Your liability is limited to \$50 if you report the loss within two business days after you realize your debit card is missing and limited to \$500 if you report the loss after two days but before 60 days.

With enough identifying information about an individual, a criminal can take over that individual's identity to conduct a wide range of crimes including:

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With the widespread use of the internet suspects responsible for identify theft can be anywhere in the world. It is important to be proactive and keep your information out of their hands as much as possible. This crime can affect anyone and become an ongoing problem as the victim is forced to deal with the ramifications including filing reports with their financial institutions and credit card companies.

Contact the Ellisville Police Department with any questions or if you believe you have been the victim of an identity theft or fraud.