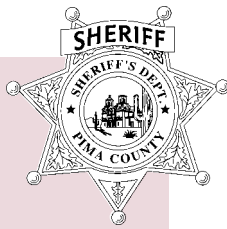


Identity Theft



Every day in Pima County, people unwittingly become victims of identity theft. Simple acts can increase your chance of becoming a victim: writing a check, using a credit card, failing to check mail on a daily basis, and throwing seemingly unimportant documents in the trash.

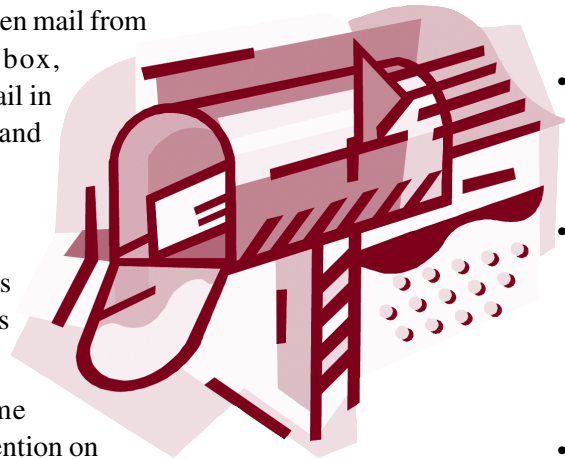
The Fastest Growing Crime in America

“Identity Theft” is the crime of assuming someone else’s identity for the purpose of obtaining credit or credit cards from banks or retailers, stealing money from their existing account, applying for loans, establishing accounts with utility companies, renting an apartment, filing bankruptcy, or obtaining employment using the victim’s name. Thousands of dollars can be stolen without the victim knowing about it for months or years.

By using your birth date, social security number, and other personal identifiers, individuals can apply for credit, loans, and new accounts in *your* name.

Identity thieves obtain this information through social security numbers on driver’s licenses, stolen mail from your mail box, discarded mail in your trash, and even your school, employer, and doctor’s or lawyer’s office.

With some simple prevention on your part, we can help eliminate this costly crime from persisting.



Prevent Identity Theft From Happening to You!

- Do not give personal information over the phone, through the mail, or over the Internet unless you have initiated the contact or know with whom you are dealing. Identity thieves will pose as bank representatives, Internet service providers, and even government officials to get you to reveal identifying information.
- Shred all documents prior to discarding them in the trash, to include pre-approved credit applications, insurance forms, bank checks and statements you are discarding, and other financial information.
- Do not use personal information such as mother’s maiden name, your birth date, the last four digits of your social security number, pet’s name or the like as passwords for anything. Although these may be easy for you to remember, they’re also easier for an identity thief to guess.
- Minimize the information and number of cards you carry. Take only those you need. Don’t carry your passport, social security card, or birth certificate unless necessary.
- Do not put your social security number on checks, credit receipts, or on your driver’s license for identification. If a business requests your social security number, provide other identification and explain why.
- Do not put your telephone number on your checks.
- Be careful using ATM and phone cards. Be aware of people looking over your shoulder trying to gain access to your personal identification number (PIN).

- Make a list and photocopy of all of your credit cards, front and back, and keep the list in a safe location in your home. Immediately report stolen or missing credit cards to the respective credit card company or bank.
- Pay attention to when your cards expire, and watch the mail for new ones to arrive. If they do not arrive, call and ask immediately about their whereabouts.
- Do not put your credit card number on the Internet unless it is an encrypted site and one you trust.
- Pay attention to billing cycles to ensure your bills arrive on time. If they do not, inquire with the respective agency to ensure a credit card thief has not changed the address.
- Cancel all credit cards you have not used in the last six months. Open credit is a prime target.
- Order your credit report at least twice a year. Reports should be obtained from the three major sources: Equifax at 800-685-1111; Experian at 888-EXPERIAN; TransUnion at 800-680-7293.
- Promptly report all mistakes on your credit report in writing. Send the letters return receipt requested. Identify the problems item by item and send with a copy of the credit report back to the credit agency. Follow up again in 30 days if you don't hear back.

Contact Us

For more information on Identity Theft and other Crime Prevention issues, contact the Pima County Sheriff's Department's Community Resources Team at (520) 741-4615. We'll be happy to talk to you about educational materials, brochures, and safety presentations. Call today.



PIMA COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

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Crime Prevention Tips From
National Crime Prevention Council
1700 K Street, NW, Second Floor
Washington, DC 20006-3817
www.weprevent.org



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Pima County
Sheriff's Department

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