

East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office

Tips to Avoid Identity Theft



- Trash cans and mailboxes contain valuable information for identity thieves. Utility bills, bank statements, credit card offers, checks, and other documents contain personal and financial information about you. Bring them in from your mailbox every day and shred them when you are finished.
- Do not give out personal or financial information over the phone or internet. Legitimate banks or businesses will not ask you to confirm account numbers, passwords, full social security numbers, or other sensitive information.
- Limit the amount of personal information you provide to others. Consider leaving your social security card at home and don't have the number displayed on your driver's license. Consider having your checks printed with your name and address only.
- Review your bank and credit card statements online or as soon as they arrive in the mail.
- Check your credit report regularly to detect any unauthorized or fraudulent accounts. You are allowed by law to receive one free credit report per year from each of the major credit bureaus (Experian, Equifax, Trans Union). You can get all three at the same or space them out during the year. You can visit AnnualCreditReport.com to safely obtain copies of your free credit report online.
- If your identity is stolen, you should report the incident to your financial institution, report it to law enforcement, and report it to the credit bureaus if needed. Once you start this process, document everything that happens; keep the names and phone numbers of the people you talk to, and keep copies of all paperwork (letters, checks, statements) related to the identity theft. The effects of identity theft can last for years and you may need to refer back to an earlier phone call or correspondence.
- To learn more about identity theft, visit the [Federal Trade Commission](http://FederalTradeCommission.gov) .