



PREVENTING IDENTITY THEFT

Identity theft is on the rise. Unlike other types of fraud, identity theft can start whenever a criminal gets access to someone else's identification, regardless of whether the victim is aware of that access.

Ways to protect yourself from identity theft

- Before you reveal any personal information, find out how it will be used and if it will be shared.
- Do not give out personal information on the phone, through mail or over the internet unless you have initiated the contact or know who you're dealing with.
- Pay attention to your billing cycles. Follow up with creditors if your bills don't arrive on time.
- Guard your mail. Deposit outgoing mail in post office boxes or at your local post office. Promptly remove mail from your mailbox after delivery. Ensure mail is forwarded or re-routed if you move or change your mailing address.
- Put passwords on your credit card, bank and phone accounts. Avoid using easily available information like your birth date, the last four digits of your SIN or your phone number.
- Minimize the identification information and number of cards you carry.
- Keep items with personal information in a safe place. An identity thief will pick through your garbage or recycling bins. Be sure to tear or shred receipts, copies of credit applications, insurance forms, physician statements and credit offers you get in the mail.
- Give your Social Insurance Number (SIN) only when absolutely

necessary. Ask to use other types of identification instead, whenever possible.

- Don't carry your SIN card; leave it in a secure place.

Remember: Simple precautions can reduce the risk of crime, but even the most alert and cautious person can still end up a victim. If you do become a victim of crime, call the police immediately. The sooner you report the crime, the better.