



Crime prevention and safety tips

Board of County Commissioners | Criminal Justice Liaison

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Protect Your Identity

The number of identity theft victims in the United States reached 11.1 million in 2009, according to the Javelin Strategy and Research.

10 Ways to Prevent Identity Theft

1. Have your financial statements and other bills delivered electronically.
2. Never carry your social security card in your wallet or purse, or any other card that may contain your social security number, like a health insurance card. Don't put your social security number on your checks.
3. Never give personal information to people over the phone, on the Internet, or through the mail unless you initiate the contact and are certain who you are communicating with. Identity thieves have claimed to be from the government, your bank, and even law enforcement to obtain this information.
4. Password protect your personal computer, laptop and Blackberry. If you have to write the passwords down, invest in a lockbox or small safe in which to keep them. It's also a safe place for your passport.
5. Beware of emails, phone calls, or text messages that may look like they're from a legitimate company, your bank, or the IRS asking you to update your personal information. This is called "phishing", a technique used by identity thieves to steal your personal information.
6. Invest in a shredder and destroy any documents containing personal information, including credit card receipts, pre-approved credit card applications, and medical and bank statements you no longer need.
7. Remove any unused credit cards from your wallet or purse. Cancel any credit cards you no longer need or use. Make sure your credit report reflects the account closures.
8. Empty your mailbox quickly, lock it, or get a Post Office Box so criminals don't have a chance to snatch credit card applications. Never mail outgoing bill payments and checks from home. They can be stolen from your mailbox and the payee's name erased with solvents.
9. Never leave credit card, ATM, or gas receipts behind. Shield the ATM keypad when entering your number so no one nearby can see.
10. Check your credit reports at least once a year and look to see that everything is accurate. Go to www.annualcreditreport.com, the authorized site for obtaining your reports for free, or call 877-322-8228. If you find an error, dispute it immediately for protection against identity theft.

Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioner goals are to reduce property crime, violent crime and overall crime by 2015. These tips are intended to increase your awareness and help avoid crime. If you have a proven prevention or awareness tip that can be shared, fax it to 813-276-2630 for consideration for a future Crime Prevention and Safety Tip. If you have questions regarding this tip, call 813-276-2033.