

Identity Theft Checklist

By John F. Smith

- Wallet
 - Remove any cards or documents not needed on a regular basis.
 - Don't keep a birth certificate in your wallet.
 - Only carry your passport when necessary.
 - If your wallet is lost or stolen, immediately contact your credit card companies and financial institutions.
- Mailbox
 - Install a locked mailbox or a mail slot that allows letters to drop inside your home.
 - When you're away, ask a neighbour to promptly pick up your mail.
 - Take note of when credit card and utility bills are supposed to arrive.
 - Reduce the number of sensitive documents mailed to your home by switching to secure online banking.
 - Destroy any unwanted pre-approved credit card applications that arrive in the mail.
 - Instruct your bank not to mail you unsolicited convenience cheques.
- Computer
 - Use intricate passwords.
 - Avoid using an automatic login feature.
 - Never leave your laptop in the car or anywhere else it could easily be stolen.
 - Use digital signatures, data encryption, and anonymizing services.
 - Use a personal firewall.
 - Install virus protection software.
 - Disable file-sharing software to block unauthorized access to information in your computer.
 - When shopping or banking online, only send personal or financial information after ensuring there is a secure transaction system.
 - Make online purchases from reputable firms.
 - Sign out of a web site and clear your Internet file after online banking.
 - Make sure your wireless Internet is protected.
 - Disconnect or disable your Wi-Fi equipment when not in use.

- Do not reply to or click on links in any e-mail asking for your personal information.
- Ensure personal information is deleted before selling a computer.
- Do not engage by replying to bogus e-mails.
- Credit Cards
 - Don't give credit card numbers on the telephone unless you are sure who you are speaking with.
 - Monitor bills and credit card activity carefully each month.
 - Keep a list of all credit card numbers and expiry dates in a safe place
 - Cut up any credit or debit cards that are expired or that you don't use.