



Who We Are

Attorney General
Tom Miller
Office Directory

What We Do

Protecting Consumers
Fighting Crime
Helping Victims of
Crime
Working for Farmers
Protecting the
Environment
Raising Child Support
Awareness
Representing State
Government
Issuing Attorney
General Opinions
Enforcing Tobacco Laws
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Complaint
Other Complaint
Resources
News Releases &
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Protect Yourself from "Identity Theft"

We call it "identity theft" when someone obtains important personal information -- such as your Social Security number or your bank or credit card account numbers -- to commit fraud or theft. An imposter might use your identity information to open fraudulent credit card accounts, secure deposits on cars or housing, create insurance benefits, or rob retirement earnings. It can be very difficult to untangle such problems.

Identity thieves might obtain crucial information by stealing from your mailbox, sorting through trash for discarded receipts or statements, or tricking you into disclosing your key personal information.

Here are tips for keeping your information private:

- Never give your credit card number or other personal information over the phone unless you initiate the call and know you can trust the business.
- Shred or tear up papers with your personal information, such as bill statements and mail solicitations for credit cards. Always take your ATM and credit card receipts.
- Remove extra information from your checks, such as Soc. Sec. no. (SSN), date of birth, address, middle name. Checks can be lost or stolen, or information copied.
- Memorize your social security and PIN numbers and passwords. Don't carry extra credit cards, Social Security card, birth certificate, or passport, unless essential.
- Choose an "assigned" driver's license number from the DOT. (Don't use your SSN.)
- Don't reveal financial or unnecessary personal information on sweepstakes entries, prize offers, warranty cards, subscriptions, city directories, etc. Information often is sold and circulated -- increasing your junk mail and the risk of Identity theft.
- Ask the national credit reporting agencies NOT to give your name to solicitors. (Credit reporting agencies sell lists to credit card marketers and others.) To remove your name, call 888-567-8688 (888-5-OPT-OUT.) You may request to be removed for two years, or you may request permanent removal.
- Examine your account statements every month to prevent unauthorized charges.

Please contact the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division for booklets on preventing identity theft (including details and addresses for keeping your information private) or on steps to take if you've been a victim. Write to the Consumer Protection Division, Des Moines, Iowa 50319, or call 515-281-5926.

[Return to Consumer Advisories](#)