

REPORTING IDENTITY THEFT

Do you believe that someone is using your personal information without your consent? Go to <https://www.identitytheft.gov/#/> to file a report with the Federal Trade Commission and get a personalized recovery plan to follow. You can also file your report over the phone at 1-877-438-4338, but if you choose this route, you will not have access to the additional benefits of filing online. They include an ID theft report, access to pre-written letters to your creditors, a recovery plan to guide you through fixing the many problems caused by ID theft, and the ability to track your progress in dealing with those problems. To access the additional benefits, create an account at <https://www.identitytheft.gov/#/>.

REPORTING TO OTHER AGENCIES

Local law enforcement. You can report your identity theft to the local law enforcement if you know who the thief is, the thief has used your name in an interaction with law enforcement, or a creditor requires you to produce a police report.

Credit Bureaus. Report your theft to one of the three major credit bureaus (Equifax, Experian, or TransUnion). Place freezes on your credit so that no one can open any new accounts.

Financial Institutions. Inform your bank and credit card issuers about potential fraudulent charges.

For more information on identity theft, how to prevent it and how to report it, please visit USA.gov at <https://www.usa.gov/identity-theft#item-208988>.



CONTACT Us:

9-1-1 FOR EMERGENCIES

352-955-1818 FOR NON-EMERGENCIES

ACSO Important Phone Numbers

ACSO Main Administration	352.367.4000
Crime Prevention Unit	352.374.1800
Crime Stoppers & Gun Bounty	352.372.7867
Dept. of the Jail	352.491.4444
Evidence Section	352.367.4076
Human Resources	352.367.4040
Narcotics Tip Line	352.374.1849
Patrol	352.367.4101
Public Information	352.367.4050
Property Unit	352.367.4078
Records Bureau	352.367.4006
Victim Advocate Unit	352.367.4193



BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

Sheriff Chad D. Scott

P.O. Box 5489, Gainesville, FL 32627
2621 SE Hawthorne Road, Gainesville, FL 32641
<https://www.acso.us>



FOLLOW US ON
SOCIAL MEDIA
@AlachuaSheriff



ACSO 2025

ALACHUA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



IDENTITY THEFT



WHAT IS IDENTITY THEFT

Identity theft occurs when a criminal steals your personal information and then uses it in a fraudulent manner. The thief might use your information to open up a credit account, sign for a loan, get medical services, or claim your tax refund.

When these types of crimes occur, the thief is not simply stealing goods and/or money, they are also stealing your reputation by damaging your credit status. It can take months or even years to clear your name after identity theft.

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

Identity theft affects approximately 1 in 20 Americans each year. In 2023, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) received 1.4 million reports of identity theft. It is estimated that there is a new identity theft case in America every 22 seconds with a total cost to consumers in the billions. (<https://identitytheft.org/statistics/>).

PROSECUTING IDENTITY THEFT

Identity theft is difficult to prosecute. According to a study done in 2006, only about 1 in every 700 identity thieves is ever arrested. While some identity thieves use low tech methods of theft like dumpster diving or shoulder surfing, many more are cybercriminals, using computers and the internet to commit their crimes. Many of these cybercriminals do not even live in the United States, further complicating efforts to bring them to justice.

The best way to address identity theft is to

prevent it from happening in the first place.

PREVENTION

Here are some tips from USA.gov on how to protect yourself from identity thieves.

- ⇒ Keep your Social Security Number (SSN) secured. Never carry your Social Security card on your person. Keep it in a safe location. Only provide your Social Security Number when it is absolutely necessary.



- ⇒ In fact, don't share any of your personal information (birth date, SSN, driver's license, or bank information) just because someone asks for it, especially if it is over the phone or online.
- ⇒ Never reply to an email requesting your SSN or bank information. The IRS does not send emails regarding audits electronically.
- ⇒ Collect your mail from your mailbox every day. All it takes to lose your identity is for a thief to collect your mail and send a change of address card to the post office so that your mail is rerouted to the thief. All those "prescreened offers of credit" that clutter up your mailbox - they are an identity thieves dream. If you are going to be away for any period of time, have a trusted neighbor collect your mail for you, or have the postal service temporarily stop delivery.
- ⇒ Pay attention to your creditors' billing cycles. If your bill or financial statement is late, contact the creditor.
- ⇒ Watch out for unauthorized transactions on your credit card and bank account statements.
- ⇒ Shred receipts, credit offers, account statements and expired credit cards so that

thieves cannot go through your trash later and steal them.

- ⇒ Store documents with your personal information on them in a safe place.
- ⇒ Never use supermarket tax concession booths. They are easily observed by identity thieves.
- ⇒ File your tax return electronically. If you must file a paper return, do so from inside of a post office.
- ⇒ Use electronic security features on your mobile phone and other computers (laptop, tablet, etc.). Always use firewalls and virus detection software on your devices. Keep those settings updated. Don't use public wi-fi if you can help it. If you must rely on public wi-fi, update your firewall settings or use a virtual private network (VPN) to keep your personal information secure.
- ⇒ Use complex passwords that thieves cannot easily guess. Change them often in case a company you do business with suffers a data breach.
- ⇒ Frequently review your credit reports, or sign up with a credit monitoring service.

WARNING SIGNS

These are some of the warning signs that you are a victim of identity theft. ([Lifelock.com](https://lifelock.com))

- ⇒ Unfamiliar loans or credit accounts on your credit report.
- ⇒ An inexplicable denial of credit.
- ⇒ Bills for accounts you did not open.
- ⇒ Unexpected drops in your credit score.
- ⇒ Collections agency calls for overdue accounts you did not open.
- ⇒ Your mail is missing from your mailbox.
- ⇒ Loss of a job opportunity after a prospective employer runs a credit check.
- ⇒ Your health insurance company tells you you've reached your benefit limit - when you know you have not.
- ⇒ The IRS tells you someone has already filed an income tax return using your SSN. (Or worse, claimed your tax refund).