



Activity:

Being Prepared for Identity Theft

Being prepared to react if your accounts or information are compromised is the best way to protect yourself from identity theft. This activity guides you to develop a clear plan to protect your identity in the event you recognize suspicious activity.

Follow the suggestions in this document to prepare yourself or your family members to react quickly to potential identity theft.

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Research Credit Monitoring Services.

These services monitor your credit history at defined intervals and notify you when any changes occur. Most such services are relatively affordable and increase your peace of mind; however, they are not absolutely necessary to secure yourself. They simply provide an added layer of security.

Prepare for Credit Freezes.

Prepare the online account or mailing address / form letter for each credit bureau to freeze your account, so that in the event of identity theft involving your credit you immediately know where to go and what information to provide.



Visit: Equifax Credit Freeze

<https://www.equifax.com/personal/credit-report-services/>

Fraud Assistance Division
Fraud hotline: 1-800-525-6285
P.O. Box 740241, Atlanta, GA 30374-0241



Visit: TransUnion Credit Freeze

<https://www.transunion.com/credit-freeze>

TransUnion: Fraud Victim Assistance
Fraud hotline: 1-800-680-7289
P.O. Box 6790, Fullerton, CA 92834-6790



Visit: Experian Credit Freeze

<https://www.experian.com/freeze/center.html>

Experian: Fraud Victim Assistance
Fraud hotline: 1-888-EXPERIAN (397-3742)
P.O. Box 9332, Allen, TX 74013

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Prepare for Quick Communications

In the event of any level of identity theft or fraudulent activity, you should know who to contact and how to contact them.

Create a file where you enter the lender or company name and contact information for all your accounts. A good way to start is to go through your wallet. If you lost your wallet, what companies would you need to contact to report a card as stolen and order a new one? From there, you can expand your list to include other major lenders such as your mortgage or vehicle loan company.

It is important to address suspicious matters urgently. You could face additional liability if you report the theft two days after you learn of the loss, or within 60 days after an account statement is sent.

You do not necessarily have to fill in all the information below. Enter just the information that will be useful to you. Do you prefer handling everything online? Setup online accounts (if possible) and review the services that can be completed online. Prefer to handle accounts over the phone? Call the main line and ask for the department number that would handle lost and stolen matters.

1) Name _____

Phone _____

Mailing Address _____

Website _____

What needs to be replaced / locked / canceled in the event it is lost or stolen?

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1) Name _____

Phone _____

Mailing Address _____

Website _____

What needs to be replaced / locked / canceled in the event it is lost or stolen?

2) Name _____

Phone _____

Mailing Address _____

Website _____

What needs to be replaced / locked / canceled in the event it is lost or stolen?

3) Name _____

Phone _____

Mailing Address _____

Website _____

What needs to be replaced / locked / canceled in the event it is lost or stolen?

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Prepare for Recovery

Especially in cases where credit or debit card accounts are compromised, list all services that would be affected by account cancelation. For example, is your vehicle loan payment or your electric bill set up to auto-pay with your debit card? If you have to replace your debit card, you will also need to update payment information with any companies or lenders that auto-deduct your payments.

1) Name _____

Phone _____

Mailing Address _____

Website _____

Purpose of this company / lender (e.g.: Car loan payment, electric company)

2) Name _____

Phone _____

Mailing Address _____

Website _____

Purpose of this company / lender (e.g.: Car loan payment, electric company)



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3) Name _____

Phone _____

Mailing Address _____

Website _____

Purpose of this company / lender (e.g.: Car loan payment, electric company)

4) Name _____

Phone _____

Mailing Address _____

Website _____

Purpose of this company / lender (e.g.: Car loan payment, electric company)

5) Name _____

Phone _____

Mailing Address _____

Website _____

Purpose of this company / lender (e.g.: Car loan payment, electric company)



**Form Letter to Credit Agency
Disputing Fraudulent or Incorrect Charges on Your Credit Report**

[Date]

[Name of Company]

[Address]

[City, State, Zip Code]

RE: **[Your Name]**
 [Your Address]
 [Your City, State, Zip Code]

Dear Sir or Madam:

I write to dispute certain information in my file resulting from **[identity theft or incorrectly reported information]**. I have circled the items I dispute on the attached copy of my credit report. The items I have identified **[do not relate to any transactions that I made or authorized or have not been reported correctly]**.

Please remove or correct this information as soon as possible. I dispute the [name of source, like “Company” or “Court”] [name of item, like “account” or “judgment”] because [explain why the item is inaccurate]. As required by section 611 of the Fair Credit Reporting Act, I am requesting that the item[s] be removed [or request another specific change] to reflect the correct information.

[If possible] – I have enclosed copies of documents that support my dispute. Please investigate and correct the disputed item[s] as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

**Form Letter to a Business or Lender
to Remove Fraudulent Charges from Your Account**

[Date]

[Name of Company]

[Fraud Department or Billing Inquiries]

[Address]

[City, State, Zip Code]

RE: **[Account Number (if known)] [Your Name]**
[Your Address]
[Your City, State, Zip Code]

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to dispute **[a]** fraudulent charge**[s]** on my account in the amount**[s]** of **[\$_____]**, and posted on **[dates]**. I am a victim of identity theft, and I did not make **[this/these]** charge**[s]**. I request that you remove the fraudulent charge**[s]** and any related finance charges from my account. Please send me an updated and accurate statement and close the account (if applicable). I also request that you stop reporting this inaccurate information and report the correct information to all of the nationwide credit reporting companies (CRCs) to which you provided it.

Please remove or correct this information as soon as possible. I dispute the [name of source, like "Company" or "Court"] [name of item, like "account" or "judgment"] because [explain why the item is inaccurate]. As required by section 611 of the Fair Credit Reporting Act, I am requesting that the item**[s]** be removed [or request another specific change] to reflect the correct information.

[If possible] – I have enclosed copies of documents that support my dispute. Please investigate and correct the disputed item**[s]** as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

All furnishers of consumer reports must comply with all applicable regulations, including regulations promulgated after this notice was first prescribed in 2004. Information about applicable regulations currently in effect can be found at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's website, consumerfinance.gov/learnmore.

NOTICE TO FURNISHERS OF INFORMATION: OBLIGATIONS OF FURNISHERS UNDER THE FCRA

The federal Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA), 15 U.S.C. § 1681-1681y, imposes responsibilities on all persons who furnish information to consumer reporting agencies (CRAs). These responsibilities are found in Section 623 of the FCRA, 15 U.S.C. § 1681s-2. State law may impose additional requirements on furnishers. All furnishers of information to CRAs should become familiar with the applicable laws and may want to consult with their counsel to ensure that they are in compliance. The text of the FCRA is set forth in full at the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection's website at consumerfinance.gov/learnmore. A list of the sections of the FCRA cross-referenced to the U.S. Code is at the end of this document.

Section 623 imposes the following duties:

Accuracy Guidelines

The banking and credit union regulators and the CFPB will promulgate guidelines and regulations dealing with the accuracy of information provided to CRAs by furnishers. The regulations and guidelines issued by the CFPB will be available at consumerfinance.gov/learnmore when they are issued. Section 623(e).

General Prohibition on Reporting Inaccurate Information

The FCRA prohibits information furnishers from providing information to a CRA that they know or have reasonable cause to believe is inaccurate. However, the furnisher is not subject to this general prohibition if it clearly and conspicuously specifies an address to which consumers may write to notify the furnisher that certain information is inaccurate. Sections 623(a)(1)(A) and (a)(1)(C).

Duty to Correct and Update Information

If at any time a person who regularly and in the ordinary course of business furnishes information to one or more CRAs determines that the information provided is not complete or accurate, the furnisher must promptly provide complete and accurate information to the CRA. In addition, the furnisher must notify all CRAs that received the information of any corrections, and must thereafter report only the complete and accurate information. Section 623(a)(2).

Duties After Notice of Dispute from Consumer

If a consumer notifies a furnisher, at an address specified by the furnisher for such notices, that specific information is inaccurate, and the information is, in fact, inaccurate, the furnisher must thereafter report the correct information to CRAs. Section 623(a)(1)(B).

If a consumer notifies a furnisher that the consumer disputes the completeness or accuracy of any information reported by the furnisher, the furnisher may not subsequently report that information to a CRA without providing notice of the dispute. Section 623(a)(3).

The federal banking and credit union regulators and the CFPB will issue regulations that will identify when an information furnisher must investigate a dispute made directly to the furnisher by a consumer. Once these regulations are issued, furnishers must comply with them and complete an investigation within 30 days (or 45 days, if the consumer later provides relevant additional information) unless the dispute is frivolous or irrelevant or comes from a "credit repair organization." The CFPB regulations will be available at consumerfinance.gov. Section 623(a)(8).

Duties After Notice of Dispute from Consumer Reporting Agency

If a CRA notifies a furnisher that a consumer disputes the completeness or accuracy of information provided by the furnisher, the furnisher has a duty to follow certain procedures. The furnisher must:

- Conduct an investigation and review all relevant information provided by the CRA, including information given to the CRA by the consumer. Sections 623(b)(1)(A) and (b)(1)(B).
- Report the results to the CRA that referred the dispute, and, if the investigation establishes that the information was, in fact, incomplete or inaccurate, report the results to all CRAs to which the furnisher provided the information that compile and maintain files on a nationwide basis. Sections 623(b)(1)(C) and (b)(1)(D).
- Complete the above steps within 30 days from the date the CRA receives the dispute (or 45 days, if the consumer later provides relevant additional information to the CRA). Section 623(b)(2).
- Promptly modify or delete the information, or block its reporting. Section 623(b)(1)(E).

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Duty to Report Voluntary Closing of Credit Accounts

If a consumer voluntarily closes a credit account, any person who regularly and in the ordinary course of business furnishes information to one or more CRAs must report this fact when it provides information to CRAs for the time period in which the account was closed. Section 623(a)(4).

Duty to Report Dates of Delinquencies

If a furnisher reports information concerning a delinquent account placed for collection, charged to profit or loss, or subject to any similar action, the furnisher must, within 90 days after reporting the information, provide the CRA with the month and the year of the commencement of the delinquency that immediately preceded the action, so that the agency will know how long to keep the information in the consumer's file. Section 623(a)(5).

Any person, such as a debt collector, that has acquired or is responsible for collecting delinquent accounts and that reports information to CRAs may comply with the requirements of Section 623(a)(5) (until there is a consumer dispute) by reporting the same delinquency date previously reported by the creditor. If the creditor did not report this date, they may comply with the FCRA by establishing reasonable procedures to obtain and report delinquency dates, or, if a delinquency date cannot be reasonably obtained, by following reasonable procedures to ensure that the date reported precedes the date when the account was placed for collection, charged to profit or loss, or subjected to any similar action. Section 623(a)(5).

Duties of Financial Institutions When Reporting Negative Information

Financial institutions that furnish information to "nationwide" consumer reporting agencies, as defined in Section 603(p), must notify consumers in writing if they may furnish or have furnished negative information to a CRA. Section 623(a)(7). The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has prescribed model disclosures, 12 CFR Part 1022, App. B.

Duties When Furnishing Medical Information

A furnisher whose primary business is providing medical services, products, or devices (and such furnisher's agents or assignees) is a medical information furnisher for the purposes of the FCRA and must notify all CRAs to which it reports of this fact. Section 623(a)(9). This notice will enable CRAs to comply with their duties under Section 604(g) when reporting medical information.

Duties when ID Theft Occurs

All furnishers must have in place reasonable procedures to respond to notifications from CRAs that information furnished is the result of identity theft, and to prevent refurnishing the information in the future. A furnisher may not furnish information that a consumer has identified as resulting from identity theft unless the furnisher subsequently knows or is informed by the consumer that the information is correct. Section 623(a)(6). If a furnisher learns that it has furnished inaccurate information due to identity theft, it must notify each consumer reporting agency of the correct information and must thereafter report only complete and accurate information. Section 623(a)(2). When any furnisher of information is notified pursuant to the procedures set forth in Section 605B that a debt has resulted from identity theft, the furnisher may not sell, transfer, or place for collection the debt except in certain limited circumstances. Section 615(f).

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau website, consumerfinance.gov/learnmore, has more information about the FCRA.

Citations for FCRA sections in the U.S. Code, 15 U.S.C. § 1681 et seq.:

Section 603	15 U.S.C. 1681	Section 615	15 U.S.C. 1681m
Section 604	15 U.S.C. 1681a	Section 616	15 U.S.C. 1681n
Section 605	15 U.S.C. 1681b	Section 617	15 U.S.C. 1681o
Section 605A	15 U.S.C. 1681c	Section 618	15 U.S.C. 1681p
Section 605B	15 U.S.C. 1681c-1	Section 619	15 U.S.C. 1681q
Section 606	15 U.S.C. 1681c-2	Section 620	15 U.S.C. 1681r
Section 607	15 U.S.C. 1681d	Section 621	15 U.S.C. 1681s
Section 608	15 U.S.C. 1681e	Section 622	15 U.S.C. 1681s-1
Section 609	15 U.S.C. 1681f	Section 623	15 U.S.C. 1681s-2
Section 610	15 U.S.C. 1681g	Section 624	15 U.S.C. 1681t
Section 611	15 U.S.C. 1681h	Section 625	15 U.S.C. 1681u
Section 612	15 U.S.C. 1681i	Section 626	15 U.S.C. 1681v
Section 613	15 U.S.C. 1681j	Section 627	15 U.S.C. 1681w
Section 614	15 U.S.C. 1681k	Section 628	15 U.S.C. 1681x
	15 U.S.C. 1681l	Section 629	15 U.S.C. 1681y