

**YOLO COUNTY
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT
PRESS RELEASE**

TIPS TO AVOID IDENTITY THEFT

Identity theft is on the rise. Offenders will steal another's personal information and use it to commit fraud and other criminal acts. Sheriff Prieto would like to offer you some tips to help protect yourself from this serious crime.

- Be very careful to whom you give your personal information, such as your mother's maiden name and your social security number. Then ask for it to be kept confidential. Inquire into how it will be used and with whom it will be shared. Ask to use other types of identifiers when possible. Do not store your social security card in your wallet.
- Never provide any personal bank account or credit card information to anyone who contacts you through a telephone solicitation. Instead, ask the caller to mail information so that you can further research the company and their products and services.
- Keep items with personal information in a safe place. Keep a list of all credit cards, account numbers, expiration dates, and the customer service phone numbers in a secure place so that you can quickly contact your creditors in case your cards are lost or stolen.
- Shred all ATM and bank receipts, old insurance forms, bank checks, expired credit cards, and any other papers that include personal information, identification, and account numbers about you. This includes pre-approved credit card solicitations! Thieves often times search through your garbage to find these forms and information and use it to apply for credit in your name.
- Minimize the number of credit cards and other items with personal information printed on them that you carry. Cancel all inactive accounts. Even though you do not use them, those accounts appear on your credit report which can be used by thieves.
- Do not leave envelopes containing your checks in your mailbox, unless it is secured. It is best to mail bills and other sensitive items at the post office.
- When creating passwords or pins, do not use the last four digits of your social security number, your birth date, middle name, mother's maiden name, address or anything else that could easily be discovered by thieves.
- Last but not least, monitor your credit card statements regularly and review a copy of your credit report at least once a year to best safeguard your credit identity.

If you find that you have become a victim of identity theft please review the tips that we have offered on our website: www.yolocountysheriff.com. Click on 'identity theft' in the center section of the page.