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12 TIPS TO PREVENT IDENTITY THEFT - WHAT TO DO

1. Keep an inventory of everything in your wallet and your PDA.
2. Copy the contents of your wallet. Copy both sides of each license and credit cards. You will know what you had in your wallet and all of the account numbers and phone numbers to call to cancel. Keep the photocopy in a safe place.
3. If you lose your credit cards, file a police report immediately in the jurisdiction where your credit cards were lost or stolen. This proves to lenders that you exercised due diligence.
4. Keep a photocopy of your passport when traveling abroad.
5. Put your work (not home) phone number on your checks.
6. Use a PO Box or office address on your checks.
7. Back up your computer data and store it away from your computer via external hard or flash drive.
8. Use strong passwords: at least six characters, including at least one symbol and number (no reference to your name, address, or mother's maiden name).
9. If you use wireless Internet access, make sure that you get help from someone who understands wireless security when you set up your access point or router.
10. If you're job hunting using resume web sites, don't apply unless the employer has a verifiable address.
11. Keep your system and browser software up to date and set to the highest security level you can tolerate. Install anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall protection, and keep them up to date as well. When possible use hardware firewalls, often available through your broadband connection router.
12. Call the 3 national credit reporting organizations immediately to place a fraud alert on your name. This alerts any company that checks your credit that your information was stolen, and they have to contact you by phone to authorize new credit. Call the Social Security fraud line number at 800-269-0271.
 - Equifax: 800-525-6285
 - Experian: 888-397-3742
 - TransUnion : 800-680 - 7289

Development: The IRS released a new form for taxpayers who have experienced (or are at risk) of harm from identity theft. Use [Form 14039, IRS Identity Theft Affidavit](#), to report identity theft to the IRS. [California State Franchise Tax Board](#) does not have a similar form but has procedures to help victims who contact the FTB. If you receive an FTB notice (billing, refund reduction, e-file rejection) that you believe is attributable to identity theft, you are given priority handling. The State focuses on the following issues:

- Ensure the victim is held harmless, i.e., they get their full and correct refund.
- Minimize the burden on the victim in resolving their identity theft-related tax problem.
- Minimize the time to resolve the case (usually within two weeks to two months).

The State flags your account to block the automated processing of your account. Anything that comes in after are manually processed for verification.