

Dealing with Identity Theft

According to the **FTC**, "identity theft occurs when someone uses your personal identifying information, like your name, Social Security number, or credit card number, without your permission, to commit fraud or other crimes".

Should you become a victim of identity theft, take the following steps immediately:

1. **Close any accounts that have been tampered with or opened fraudulently.** Contact the security and/or fraud department of the companies that hold the accounts. Recap the phone call in writing and be sure to include photocopies of supporting documents. Send your letters by certified mail, with a return receipt, so you will know that the company received them and on what date.
2. **Place a fraud alert on your credit reports.** Contact the credit reporting agencies Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion. Request that your accounts are flagged with a fraud alert and that no new credit is granted without your permission. If you choose, the fraud alert can remain active for seven years. In addition, it's smart to request a copy of your credit report from each agency for your review.
3. **Change your passwords.** Make sure that you use strong passwords that include numbers and special characters such as @ and \$. Do not use personal information such as your birthday or middle name. It is a good practice to change your passwords frequently.
4. **Notify your local police department.** File an identity theft report with your local police department and send a copies of the report to your bank and credit card companies. **Note:** You may be required to file a report in the jurisdiction where the crime took place.
5. **Keep everything on record.** File copies of all documents such as emails, messages, letters and records of phone calls in a safe place. Recap all phone calls in dated letters sent to the company with which you have spoken. Be sure to document the names of the representatives that you speak with.

The information and recommendations contained here have been compiled from sources believed to be reliable and represent the best current opinion on the subject. No warranty, express or implied by Presidio Bank, is made as to the absolute correctness or sufficiency of the information contained. This is meant as general information only, particular situations may require additional actions.