Fraud Alert!

Cyber-Crime Impact on Identity Theft & Account Fraud

- Minimize risk
- Vigilance works
- Fraud prevention tools

As you probably already know — one of the three major consumer credit reporting agencies reported that hackers had gained access to their company data files. The stolen files potentially compromise sensitive information for **143 million American consumers.** This personal information included Social Security numbers, birth dates, addresses and, in some instances, driver's license numbers.

Cyber-security experts agree that the following safeguards are critical to protect personal information and accounts.

■ Account fraud & identity theft

When cyber-criminals obtain personal information — they use it to open new accounts or to target existing accounts. This online fraud is often hard to detect without account vigilance.

Safeguard 1
Consider placing a fraud alert on credit files and accounts. A fraud alert warns creditors that a person may be an identity theft victim and that they should verify that anyone seeking credit in that name really is that person.

Safeguard 2
Monitoring bank, credit and debit card statements is critical. Get into the habit of checking accounts frequently if not daily. If an unauthorized transaction appears on any statement report it immediately.

Safeguard 3
Notify your financial institution immediately if you suspect any sort of unusual activity within your accounts.

Safeguard 4
Check the annual Social Security statement that lists the earnings record, work credits and an estimate of future benefits. Make sure that the reported income figure is accurate and matches what was earned. If there is a difference contact the Social Security Administration.

Safeguard 5
Don't get phished. Phishing is a scam using fraudulent e-mails, appearing to be from a trusted source such as a financial institution or government agency. The e-mail directs you to a fake website that looks legitimate and asks you to "verify" personal information.

Fact: 7% of users are tricked into opening a link or attachment from a phishing email.

■ IRS warns against tax fraud and scams

IRS scams on the rise — The Internal Revenue Service reports that criminals are using phishing scams which ask an individual to update their e-files. (The criminals also use telephone calls impersonating IRS Agents complete with false badge numbers.)

Safeguard 6
File your taxes early — as soon as you have the tax information you need, before a scammer can. Tax identity theft happens when someone uses your Social Security number to get a tax refund.

The IRS will never take the following actions:

- Call to demand immediate payment using a specific payment method such as a prepaid debit card, gift card or wire transfer.
- Demand that you pay taxes without the opportunity to question or appeal the amount they say you owe.
- Threaten to bring in local police, immigration officers or other law-enforcement to have you arrested for not paying your taxes. The IRS also cannot revoke your driver's license, business licenses, or immigration status.

Safeguard 7

FREE CREDIT REPORTS YOUR BEST TOOL

When it comes to guarding against identity theft, account fraud and cyber-fraud, one of the most important tools at your disposal is your credit report. It details all your credit transaction accounts, and will be the first place that unusual charges or entirely new accounts will appear. And you can monitor your report for FREE.
Since Federal law permits consumers to a free credit report annually from each of the three major credit reporting agencies, cyber-security experts advise you to get a free report from each agency every four months.

TO ORDER YOUR FREE CREDIT REPORT,
GO TO THE ONLY AUTHORIZED SOURCE:
www.annualcreditreport.com
1-877-322-8228

A security partnership

Law enforcement officials have joined with your financial institution to combat these criminals on all fronts. Your financial institution has already made substantial investments in training personnel, upgrading to the latest technology and enhancing security infrastructure with the single goal of protecting your accounts and your personal information. But more teamwork is needed!

Resources

- **Federal Trade Commission**
  http://www.ftc.gov
- **U.S. Treasury Department**
  http://www.treasury.gov
- **Financial Fraud Enforcement Task Force**
  www.stopfraud.gov
- **Consumer Fraud** (Department of Justice Homepage)
  www.usdoj.gov
- **Identity Theft Resource Center**
  www.idtheftcenter.org
- **Internal Revenue Service**
  www.irs.gov
- **National Credit Union Administration**
  www.ncua.gov
- **Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation**
  www.fdic.gov