

IDENTITY THEFT

A message from the U.S. Postal Service, March 2003

EVERY YEAR, THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE AND BUSINESSES ARE VICTIMIZED BY IDENTITY THEFT SCHEMES. WE ARE ENCOURAGING CONSUMERS TO SAFEGUARD THEIR PERSONAL INFORMATION.

Consumers can take the following steps to minimize the risk of identity theft:

Order a recent credit report from the three credit bureaus once a year to check for fraudulent activity or other discrepancies.

Memorize your social security number and all of your passwords. Do not record them on any cards or anything contained in a purse or wallet.

Mail in your mailbox - remove it promptly.

Only if you initiated the phone call should you give personal information over the telephone, such as social security number, date of birth, mother's maiden name, credit card number, or bank personal identification number (PIN) code.

Never loan credit cards to anyone else.

Shred preapproved/Ed credit applications, credit card receipts, bills and other financial information you don't want before throwing them in the trash or recycling bin.

Emply your wallet of extra credit or identification cards, or cancel the cards you don't use and keep a list of the active cards you use.

Never, unless you receive a secured authentication key from the provider, disclose account numbers, credit card numbers or other personal financial data on any Web site or online service location.

Sign all new credit cards upon receipt.

Entering any interactive service when you subscribe to an online service, you may be asked to give credit card information. Beware of con artists who ask you to confirm your enrollment in the service by disclosing the password or the credit card account number that you used to enroll.