What is Identity Theft?

- Illegally using another person’s name, Social Security number, driver’s license number, birth certificate, credit card, address, telephone number or any other form of identifying information to obtain credit, money, goods, services, employment or anything else of value or benefit without that person’s consent.
Scope of the Problem

- Criminals perceive this as low risk and high profit
- Further facilitates other crimes
- 61% of victims do not notify police
- Average arrest rate is under 5%
Are You At Risk?
How Identity Thieves Get Your Information

- Information gained from your place of employment, other businesses or institutions
- Stealing mail containing bank and credit statements, credit card offers, new checks, and tax information
- Rummaging through your trash, the trash at your place of business, or public dumps
- Posing as landlords, employers, or someone who may have legal right to your information
How Identity Thieves get your information Cont…

- Stealing your credit or debit card numbers by capturing the information in a data storage device in a practice known as “skimming.”
- Devices attached to ATM machines that record vital information on the card
- Stealing your wallet or purse
- Stealing personal information from your home
How identity Thieves Get Your Information Cont…

- Stealing personal information through email, phone contacts, posing as a legitimate company or claiming there has been a problem with your account
How Will I know if I’m a Victim of Identity Theft?

Often, there are no warning signs that identity theft has occurred. However, some reasons for concern are:

- Your monthly credit card and bank statements suddenly stop arriving
- You are denied credit for no reason
- You start getting bills from companies you do not recognize
- Credit collection agencies try to collect on debts that do not belong to you
How to Protect Yourself

- Manage your personal information wisely
- Determine how your information will be used before providing
- Guard your mail from theft
- Passwords: Avoid using mothers maiden name, date of birth, last 4 digits of Social Security Number, or a series of consecutive numbers
- Minimize the number of credit cards & identification you carry
How to Protect Yourself Cont…

- Do not carry your Social Security card in your wallet
- Don’t give out personal information on the telephone, mail or internet unless you initiated contact or you are sure with whom you are speaking
- Keep personal information in a safe place
- **Shred** discarded personal records and documents
How to Protect Yourself Cont...

- Verify that your employment records are kept in a secure location.
- Order copies of your credit report yearly from each of the credit reporting agencies:
  - [www.anualcreditreport.com](http://www.anualcreditreport.com)
  - Phone: 877-322-8228
What if I Become a Victim?

- Contact local law enforcement to report the crime
- Contact the fraud department from each of the 3 credit bureaus:

  Experian, 888-397-3742
  www.experian.com

  Equifax, 800-525-6285
  www.equifax.com

  Trans Union, 800-680-7289
  www.transunion.com
What if I become a Victim Cont…

- Place a fraud alert and a victim statement asking creditors to contact you
- Obtain a free copy of your credit report and review it
- Contact creditors for any fraudulent accounts opened or tampered
- Document and keep records of all correspondence
Learn more:

References:
- http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6866768
- http://www.ou.edu/oupd/idtheft.htm
- http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft/