

PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST IDENTITY THEFT

The Federal Trade Commission reported receiving 5.4 million reports of fraud, identity theft and other consumer issues in 2023, and consumers reported losing more than \$10 billion to fraud, a 14% increase from 2022.¹

At Safeguard Investment Advisory Group, LLC, we want to help you avoid identity theft and know what to do in the unfortunate event someone uses your personal information to open accounts, file for a tax refund or make purchases.

COMMON TACTICS OF IDENTITY THIEVES²

Phishing and Smishing

Sending fraudulent emails or text messages asking you to verify account information.

- **Pro protection tip:** Don't reply, and never give personal information to questionable sources.

Dumpster Diving

Stealing account or Social Security numbers from garbage cans or mailboxes.

- **Pro protection tip:** Shred all important documents before throwing out.

Wireless Hacking

Connecting to public Wi-Fi or unsecured home networks seeking personal information.

- **Pro protection tip:** Avoid online banking on public Wi-Fi, and secure your home network.

Initiating Scams

Using fake lottery scams, false job ads and other phony offers to obtain information.

- **Pro protection tip:** If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

Shoulder Surfing

Watching, listening to conversations or using devices to steal a PIN or payment information.

- **Pro protection tip:** Be aware of your surroundings, and avoid using devices that appear tampered with or compromised.

MORE TIPS TO HELP PROTECT YOURSELF³

1. Don't carry your Social Security card in your wallet.
2. Collect mail daily, and place a hold on mail whenever you are away.
3. Review credit card and bank statements regularly.
4. Install firewalls and virus-detection software on your home computer.
5. Create complex passwords, and change passwords if a breach occurs.
6. Review credit reports once a year, and if needed, freeze your credit files for free with Equifax, Experian, Innovis, TransUnion and the National Consumer Telecommunications and Utilities Exchange.
7. Consider backing up your photos and important documents to a reputable cloud service rather than relying solely on your local PC.

¹ Federal Trade Commission. Feb. 9, 2024. "As Nationwide Fraud Losses Top \$10 Billion in 2023, FTC Steps Up Efforts to Protect the Public." <https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/news/press-releases/2024/02/nationwide-fraud-losses-top-10-billion-2023-ftc-steps-efforts-protect-public>. Accessed Aug. 13, 2024.

² Washington State Department of Financial Institutions. "Common Tactics Thieves Use to Steal Your Identity." <https://dfi.wa.gov/financial-education/information/common-tactics-thieves-use-steal-your-identity>. Accessed Aug. 13, 2024.

³ USA.gov. "Identity Theft." <https://www.usa.gov/identity-theft>. Accessed Aug. 13, 2024.



HOW TO REPORT IDENTITY THEFT

Report identity theft to the Federal Trade Commission online at www.IdentityTheft.gov or by calling 877-438-4338 (877-IDTHEFT). The FTC also recommends reporting the identity theft to the local police. The police will require the following:

1. Photo ID — Driver's license or passport
2. Proof of your address — Mortgage statements, rental agreements and utility bills are acceptable
3. Proof of identity theft — Provide details of how your information was stolen and when you discovered the theft

RECOMMENDED THEFT PROTECTION SERVICES

- Experian IdentityWorks (www.experian.com)
- Get an Identity Protection PIN <https://www.irs.gov/identity-theft-fraud-scams/get-an-identity-protection-pin>
- IdentityForce (www.identityforce.com)
- IdentityIQ (www.identityiq.com)
- Identity Guard (www.identityguard.com)
- IDShield (www.idshield.com)
- ID Watchdog (www.idwatchdog.com)
- LifeLock (www.lifelock.com)
- PrivacyGuard (www.privacyguard.com)
- Zander Insurance Group (www.zanderins.com)
- Bitdefender EDR (www.bitdefender.com)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- How to Report Identity Theft <https://www.usnews.com/360-reviews/privacy/identity-theft-protection/how-to-report-identity-theft>
- What is Identity Theft? https://www.lifelock.com/how-it-works/what-is-identity-theft?inid=lifelock_nav_what-is-identity-theft_home:home
- Get an Identity Protection PIN <https://www.irs.gov/identity-theft-fraud-scams/get-an-identity-protection-pin>
- EDR vs. Antivirus: Learn the Differences <https://www.connectwise.com/blog/cybersecurity/edr-vs-antivirus#:~:text=Cons:%20EDR%20requires%20additional%20setup%20time%20and,usually%20costlier%20compared%20to%20traditional%20antivirus%20software>



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