



THE NUMBER ONE SOURCE OF IDENTITY THEFT IS YOUR WALLET

When it comes to identity fraud, the biggest source of information isn't online, but in your wallet, warns crime prevention officers. Purse snatchings, pickpocketing, theft of purses and wallets from locked vehicles and robbery are the biggest sources of identity theft. These thefts don't require much know-how, and because they rarely involve weapons, typically have lower penalties if the individual is caught.



While the victim may not be able to prevent the theft - and the officers urge individuals NOT to fight back or resist - they can avoid handing the thief all of their information.

A simple purse snatching can provide a thief with cash, credits cards, checks, bank account numbers, car keys and registration information on the car (making it easy to identify and steal), address and access to the victim's home, and more.

From Cary Johnson of the 1st Judicial District Office in Colorado come the following tips:

1. Go through your wallet or purse and reduce the amount of financial information you carry with you. If you don't need to have personal information with you, leave it home in a secure place.
2. Carry only what you will need for the day. Take one credit card, one debit card or check, not a whole book of checks. Never have debit card pin numbers with your card.
3. Carry your identification and credit card in a card-size wallet that you can hang around your neck under your clothes, put in an inner coat pocket, a deep pants pocket, or, if need be, "the bra."
4. If you need vehicle registration or insurance cards with you, carry ones without your home address. Have as little information as possible on you with home information.
5. Lock your phone. Many phone companies have "self-destruct" or lockdown routines that prevent access to programs and data after a certain number of false login attempts.
6. Do take a purse or carry bag with you for personal belongings you might need, just don't have your identification and credit card in it. This is an easy decoy if someone wants to rob you.
7. Never leave identification and credit cards in your car when exercising. Thieves are often watching parking areas at rec centers, gyms and popular running spots for potential car thefts.

If your information is stolen, act quickly to prevent its use. The thieves know they will have limited time to use the information and will be moving quickly.

- Stop payments from bank accounts immediately - particularly if you had a debit card in your purse with pin numbers. Most banks have 24-hour numbers.
- Notify credit card companies.
 - MASTERCARD: 1-800-627-8372 (US) or 1-636-722-7111 (Global)
 - VISA: 1-800-VISA-911 (1-800-8472-911) or 1-303-967-1096 (Global, call collect)
 - AMEX: 1-800-528-4800
 - DISCOVER: 1-800-347-2683

- Have the big three credit bureaus place fraud alerts on your accounts.
 - Experian: 1-888-EXPERIAN (1-888-397-3742)
 - Equifax: 1-800-525-6285
 - Trans Union: 1-800-680-7289
- File a report with the police.
 - They may not be able to do anything, but this provides evidence in your favor should you become a victim of identity theft or fraud.
- If your keys were stolen, arrange to have locks changed on your vehicle and home.
- Notify the driver's license bureau if your license has been stolen or contact other sources of identification - including student IDs, to alert them to the theft.
- If your Social Security card was in your wallet
 - Call the IRS Identity Protection Unit at 1-800-908-4490
 - File the loss with the Federal Trade Commission at 1-877-ID-THEFT
 - Report the loss to the Internet Crime Complaint Center
- Try to list everything else that was in the wallet
 - Other items in your wallet may seem insignificant but could come back to haunt you. These include memberships to movie rental stores, work ID cards and access badges, medical insurance cards, computer passwords, and padlock keys.
- Order Credit Reports
 - Every year, you are entitled to a free credit report from each of the three major credit bureaus, without any strings attached. The easiest way to obtain these is to visit the Annual Credit Report site. Then, take a close look at them to spot any possible fraudulent spending.



Brian R. Carruthers, CFP®, CMT

Brian R. Carruthers & Associates
Your Conservative Advisory Firm Since 1990
301 Forest Avenue
Laguna Beach, California 92651-2115 USA

Telephone: 1-949-464-1900
www.gobcafunds.com
brian@gobcafunds.com