

Reducing identity crime



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Reducing identity crime

Recent years have seen a massive growth in identity theft. This is a crime on a global scale and anyone who shops on the internet or makes transactions using 'plastic' is potentially susceptible to this threat.

Information that is useful to identity thieves includes your name, date of birth, address, bank and credit card details and National Insurance number. If criminals discover these personal details, they can use them to open bank accounts or obtain credit cards, loans or goods in your name. Unfortunately it is often well after the event that a victim becomes aware that a crime has been committed against them.

The advice given in this leaflet will help you to protect your identity and lessen the chances of criminals committing fraud in your name.

Personal documents

- Keep your personal documents in a safe, lockable place. Take extra care with documents such as share certificates.
- Shred unwanted documents such as old bills, bank statements or personalised junk mail before disposing of it.
- If your passport, driving licence or other important documents are lost or stolen, contact the issuing organisation immediately.
- Cancel lost or stolen cards immediately.
- Check your bank and credit card statements carefully. Report any suspicious transactions to your bank.



Shred unwanted documents before disposing of them

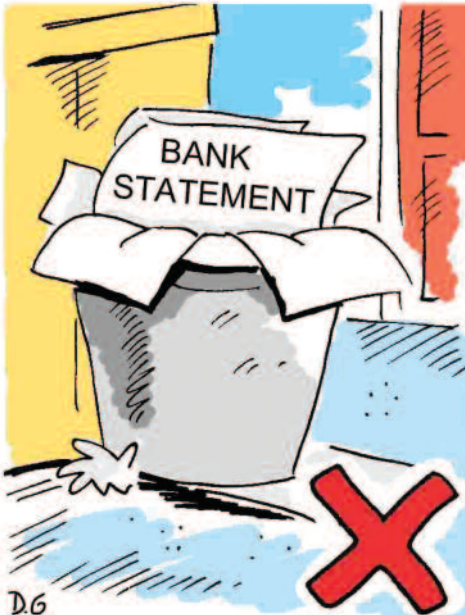
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Passwords and Personal Identification Numbers (PINs)

- Never give personal or account details, or passwords, to anyone who contacts you by phone – even if they claim to be from your bank. A bank will never ask for your PIN or your password.
- Use different passwords and PINs for different accounts.
- Don't use obvious passwords, such as your date of birth or your mother's maiden name.



Keep personal documents and valuables in a safe, lockable place



Take extra care disposing of personal documents

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- Memorise passwords and PINs if possible. Try and avoid keeping written copies of them.
- Never keep a copy of your password and PINs in your purse or wallet.
- Never use public computers to access personal information.

Mailing lists

- Where possible, remove your name from mailing lists.

Online security

- Use passwords whenever possible – and change them regularly.
- Ensure up to date security software and a personal firewall are installed on your computer.
- Be wary of unsolicited emails.
- If you receive a suspicious email asking for personal details do not respond. Visit **www.banksafeonline.org.uk** for further advice.
- Only conduct transactions with secure websites.

When moving house

- If you change your address, immediately inform your bank, your card issuers and any other organisations you deal with.
- Arrange for Royal Mail to redirect your post to your new address for at least a year.

Keep a regular check

- Request a regular copy of your personal credit file from a credit reference agency. This will indicate if someone has applied for credit in your name.

For more crime prevention advice visit **www.surrey.police.uk**

Contacting Surrey Police

For non-emergency calls or to contact your local police officer call **0845 125 2222*** or **01483 571212**, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Always dial **999** in an emergency.

If you have hearing difficulties or speech impairment, our minicom number is **1800** or **01483 539999**.

* The cost of calls from landlines and mobiles may vary. Surrey Police does not profit from the provision of this number.