

Memorandum

To: Sage Hill Advisory & Management Clients

By: Sage Hill

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Re: Credit Fraud Protection

Date: 11 April 2011

In the past (see www.sagehilladvisory.com / Resources / Newsletters / Identity Theft), we published a white paper based upon our research regarding that very important issue of Identity Theft. As an update on such defensive measures, following are some tips to protect your information (feel free to pass this on to family, friends, or business colleagues):

Read this and make a copy for your files in case you need to refer to it someday.

1. Do not sign the back of your credit cards. Instead, put 'PHOTO ID REQUIRED.'
2. When you are writing checks to pay on your credit card accounts, DO NOT put the complete account number on the 'For' line. Instead, just put the last four numbers. The credit card company knows the rest of the number, and anyone who might be handling your check as it passes through all the check processing channels won't have access to it.
3. Put your work phone # on your checks instead of your home phone. If you have a PO Box use that instead of your home address. If you do not have a PO Box, use your work address. Never have your SS# printed on your checks. You can add it if it is necessary. But if you have it printed, anyone can get it.
4. Place the contents of your wallet on a photocopy machine. Do both sides of each license, credit card, etc. You will know what you had in your wallet and all of the account numbers and phone numbers to call and cancel. Keep the photocopy in a safe place.

I also carry a photocopy of my passport when I travel either here or abroad. We've all heard horror stories about fraud that's committed on us in stealing a Name, address, Social Security number, credit cards.

Here's some critical information to limit the damage in case your (or someone you know) wallet or other critical information is stolen:

> we have been told we should cancel our credit cards immediately. But the key is having the toll free numbers and your card numbers handy so you know whom to call. Keep those where you can find them.

> File a police report immediately in the jurisdiction where your credit cards, etc., were stolen. This proves to credit providers you were diligent, and this is a first step toward an investigation (if there ever is one).

> Call the 3 national credit reporting organizations immediately to place a fraud alert on your name and also call the Social Security fraud line number. The alert means any company that checks your credit knows your information was stolen, and they have to contact you by phone to authorize new credit.

By the time I was advised to do this, almost two weeks after the theft, all the damage had been done. There are records of all the credit checks initiated by the thieves' purchases, none of which you will know about before placing the alert. It will very possibly stop the thieves them dead in their tracks.

Here are the numbers you always need to contact about your wallet, if it has been stolen:

1.) Equifax: [1-800-525-6285](tel:1-800-525-6285)

2.) Experian (formerly TRW): [1-888-397-3742](tel:1-888-397-3742)

3.) Trans Union: [1-800-680 7289](tel:1-800-680-7289)

4.) Social Security Administration (fraud line):
[1-800-269-0271](tel:1-800-269-0271)

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