



IFI Newsletter

A quarterly newsletter from Identity Fraud, Inc.

ISSUE #1 - July 1, 2002

1. **FTC Report for 2001**
2. **Families are Concerned about Fraud**
3. **Mailboxes are a Target**
4. **Your Profile is for Sale**
5. **Blue Postal Box at Risk?**

FTC Report for 2001

The Federal Trade Commission said, that of the 204,000 consumer complaints lodged with it last year, 42 percent of them involved identity theft. Privacy advocates say the number of victims of identity theft may number 750,000 a year, with victims losing tens of millions of dollars.

California led the nation in the number of reported identity thefts (15, 115) and in other consumer fraud complaints (14,428).

The number of victims of identity theft in the state was double the number in the next highest ranked state, New York.

The District of Columbia had the highest rate of identity theft per capita, with 77 victims for every 100,000 people. California and Nevada followed with 45 and 41 victims per 100,000, respectively.

Los Angeles, with 1,335 identity theft complaints, and San Francisco, with 574, were the most likely places to lose your identity in California, followed by San Diego, 500, Long Beach, 316, and San Jose, 313.

The FTC said the amount lost to consumer fraud in California last year -- not all of it, just what was reported was \$19,700,972, an average of \$1,881 per victim.

Prevention Tips

- Shred all mail before discarding
- Never leave mail in your mailbox for the postman to pick up
- Never give out personal information over the phone
- Never carry your social security card or number in your wallet
- Always review your credit card statements carefully each month

Many Families are Concerned about Identity Fraud.

A survey showed that 73% of Americans believe that identity fraud is an increasing problem, and 78% are concerned that it poses a serious personal threat in today's world.

There also seems to be many misconceptions about how identity fraud occurs.

While many think the majority of identity fraud occurs via the internet, the reality is that most fraud occurs from criminals obtaining information through face to face contact, mail theft and criminals going through the trash.

While many people think criminals are more likely to use the internet or telephone to commit fraud, most fraud is committed by criminals face to face as well.

Most people say they are concerned about fraud, but many are not being very proactive in reducing their risk to fraud.

Mail Boxes are a Target

Identity thieves continue to expand their mode of obtaining individuals information. Thieves have hit many new home developments that have centrally located mailboxes.

What the criminals do is stake out the location for several days watching the time the postman delivers to the set of boxes and what time people pick up their mail. Once they have an idea of when nobody is around they pull up to the box with a pick up truck, throw a chain around it and rip the box right out of the ground and take off.

This gives them access to several mailboxes at once. It is usually more valuable with a lower probability of being caught then robbing a bank.

If you live in a neighborhood that has centrally located boxes, you should advise your neighbors to always be on the look out. If there are neighbors home during the day try staggering your times when you pick up your mail.

Your Profile is for Sale

Drugs are not the only things being sold on street corners.

Criminals have realized that "profiles" - (individual names, address, phone numbers, drivers license numbers, social security numbers, etc.) are very valuable.

Per law enforcement officials, depending on the neighborhood and the amount of detail in the profile being sold, fraudsters are paying anywhere between \$10.00 and \$100.00 per profile.

Post Office Mail Box May be at Risk

The blue post office mailboxes at your local corner are also at risk. Identity thieves have been known to pull up to these as well and rip them from their stations.

You are better off dropping your mail directly at the post office. An indication of the severity of mail theft rests with a recent example in Northern California where a postal delivery truck was Hijacked at gunpoint. The truck was carrying ordinary mail, but ordinary mail contains valuable information and thieves know this.

IDENTITY FRAUD, INC.

Engaging Solutions for Identity Protection!

www.IdentityFraud.com

Email: info@identityfraud.com

© 2002. All Rights Reserved.