



## VILLAGE OF GLENCOE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

### IDENTITY THEFT INFORMATION

Identity Theft is increasing at an alarming rate. Many incidents of identity theft have been reported to Public Safety by Glencoe residents and the number of reports is rising. Unfortunately, these cases are often difficult to pursue at the local law enforcement level based on jurisdictional limitations. A crime must occur within the jurisdictional boundaries of Glencoe in order for the Glencoe Public Safety Department to successfully investigate and prosecute the crime. However, the Glencoe Public Safety Department will always take an informational report for any resident who thinks they may be an identity theft victim.

Due to the rising reports of this crime, consumers must take steps to prevent being a victim. The following recommendations may not prevent fraud entirely, but these steps can close some of the avenues of identity theft.

- 1. PROTECT YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION** – avoid giving out any personal information over the phone, through the mail or over the Internet unless you know who you are dealing with or have initiated the contact. Before giving any information, make sure you are dealing with a legitimate organization. Secure personal information at home, such as bills, check books, credit cards, receipts; especially if you employ outside help or use service people. Don't respond to offers that ask for personal information unless you're completely secure with who you are dealing with.
- 2. GUARD YOUR MAIL AND TRASH** – Take your outgoing mail directly to the post office; avoid leaving it in your own box where it can easily be stolen. Don't leave your incoming mail sitting too long. If you're out of town, have a neighbor pick it up or put a temporary stop on it. Shred personal documents such as bills, checks, charge receipts, insurance forms, bank and medical statements before throwing them out. Many identity thieves will go through your trash hoping to find your personal information. Shred pre-approved credit card offers before throwing them away. These solicitations are often generated from pre-screened lists of credit reports provided by credit bureaus. Contact the major credit cards bureaus to have your name removed from these types of lists.
- 3. DON'T CARRY YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY CARD WITH YOU** – leave this in a secure place at home or a safety deposit box.
- 4. GUARD YOUR PURSE, WALLET, CELL PHONE & P.D.A.** – Don't leave these items unattended, even when parked in your driveway. Don't leave these items in your car. When shopping or going to the gym, keep these items in sight at all times.
- 5. PROTECT YOUR HOME COMPUTER** – Home computers carry a wealth of your personal information these days. Identity thieves can steal your information without ever setting foot in your home. Use virus software and update it often. Use firewall programs. Guard the security of any online transactions you make by using a secure browser. Pay attention to website privacy policies. Websites should tell you how they use and protect the information they provide you. Don't download unknown files sent to you or click on hyperlinks from unfamiliar emails. Know what your children are doing on the computer when online. Avoid storing personal information on laptops. Laptops are easily lost or stolen. Beware of on-line scams, such as "phishing" (Phishing is an email scam looking for people to "update" billing information for their accounts). Often, criminals will use links to "look-alike" websites in the email to trick consumers into

thinking they are a legitimate business. Consumers are then tricked into giving their personal information to criminals who use it to commit identity theft. If you have questions about the legitimacy of an on-line request contact the company at their customer service prior to providing any information.

**6. PLACE PASSWORDS ON YOUR BANK, CREDIT CARD AND PHONE ACCOUNTS –** Avoid using common passwords like your birth date, mother’s maiden name, phone numbers or last four digits or your social security number. Change these passwords regularly.

**7. ORDER A COPY OF YOUR CREDIT REPORT –** Regularly checking your credit can help prevent mistakes and catch fraudulent activity before it has a chance to spread. Consumers often find out about identity theft when they go to make a major purchase like a home or car. Knowing what your credit report says can help you correct problems before they impact future financial transactions.

**8. PERSONAL CHECKS –** Keep as little information as possible on your personal checks. It is not necessary to have your name, address and telephone number printed on them. Definitely avoid putting your social security number on checks. Don’t write credit card numbers on checks in the memo field.

**9. UNEXPECTED PEOPLE AT YOUR DOOR –** Be aware of anyone who shows up at your home that you are not expecting. Many thieves will arrive at your home saying they are there to perform service, but their main goal really is to access your home. Common scams include someone who says they are tree trimming for a neighbor and they need to access your yard, or someone who may identify themselves as a public works employee or utility person wanting access to a meter. These thieves will attempt to distract you while their accomplice enters your home and steals money, jewelry, credit cards and checks. If you are unsure of anyone at your door, DO NOT let them in and call public safety immediately.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS ABOUT  
IDENTITY THEFT OR THINK YOU MAY BE A VICTIM,  
PLEASE CALL PUBLIC SAFETY AT 847-835-4112 OR EMAIL  
US FOR INFORMATION AT [GDPSINFO@EMAIL.COM](mailto:GDPSINFO@EMAIL.COM).**