WHAT IS IDENTITY THEFT?

IDENTITY THEFT IS WHEN SOMEONE ELSE USES YOUR PERSONAL IDENTIFYING INFORMATION TO OBTAIN A CREDIT CARD, LOAN, OR ANY OTHER TYPE OF CREDIT OR SERVICE IN YOUR NAME, WHEN SOMEONE OBTAINS EMPLOYMENT USING YOUR INFORMATION, OR WHEN SOMEONE ELSE FILES A BANKRUPTCY CASE USING YOUR NAME OR SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU ARE A VICTIM OF IDENTITY THEFT?

- FILE A POLICE REPORT IMMEDIATELY
- CONTACT ALL THREE CREDIT BUREAUS TO GET A COPY OF YOUR REPORTS AND TO PLACE FRAUD ALERTS
- CONTACT ALL OF YOUR CREDITORS, TO ADVISE THEM YOUR INFORMATION HAS BEEN COMPROMISED
- CLOSE ALL AFFECTED ACCOUNTS
- REQUEST THAT CREDITORS INDICATE THAT YOUR ACCOUNTS WERE "CLOSED BY CONSUMER'S REQUEST"
- HAVE CREDITORS CONTACT YOU BEFORE OPENING ANY NEW ACCOUNTS OR MAKING CHANGES TO YOUR EXISTING ACCOUNTS
- PASSWORD PROTECT ALL YOUR ACCOUNTS

CHECK YOUR CREDIT AND PROTECT YOURSELF

- REQUEST A CREDIT REPORT FROM EACH OF THE CREDIT BUREAUS:
  - EQUIFAX (800) 685-1111
  - EXPERIAN (888) 397-3742
  - TRANS UNION (800) 888-4213
- SHRED PERSONAL INFORMATION
- KEEP A LIST OF YOUR CREDIT CARDS AND BANK ACCOUNTS AT HOME, SAFELY LOCKED AWAY

IDENTITY THEFT
A Quick Reference Guide

Orange County Sheriff-Coroner Department
SANDRA HUTCHENS SHERIFF-CORONER

PC 530.5: Unauthorized Use of Personal Identifying Information

(a) Every person who willfully obtains personal identifying information, as defined in subdivision (b), of another person without the authorization of that person, and uses that information for any unlawful purpose, including to obtain, or attempt to obtain, credit, goods, services, or medical information in the name of the other person is guilty of a public offense.
HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOURSELF FROM IDENTITY THEFT?

- DO NOT PROVIDE PERSONAL INFORMATION OVER THE PHONE, THROUGH THE MAIL, OR OVER THE INTERNET

- IF YOU RECEIVE A CALL CLAIMING YOU WON A PRIZE:
  A) Do NOT provide/confirm personal information
  B) Do NOT send ANY money
  C) Do NOT provide any credit or banking information

- GUARD YOUR WALLET/PURSE:
  A) Keep it close to your physical body at all times
  B) Do NOT carry your PIN numbers
  C) Do NOT carry your Passport or Visa
  D) Do NOT carry more credit cards than you need
  E) Do NOT carry your Social Security card or number

- KEEP YOUR MAIL PRIVATE AND SECURE:
  A) Get a locking Mail Box OR……
  B) Use the U.S. Post Office for outgoing mail
  C) Do NOT leave mail lying around in your home
  D) Do NOT allow mail to pile up if you are away
  E) HAVE NEW CHECKS DELIVERED TO YOUR BANK NOT TO YOUR HOME

- BE CAREFUL WITH PERSONAL INFORMATION AT HOME AND WHEN TRAVELING:
  A) Use a telephone where your conversations cannot be overheard
  B) Make sure no one is looking over your shoulder at ATM’s or pay phones
  C) Do NOT use a cell phone to provide personal information

Contact Information For Victims of Identity Theft

- Department of Motor Vehicles - if there was fraud involving your driver’s license
  www.dmv.ca.gov

- Internal Revenue Service - if someone committed tax fraud in your name
  www.irs.gov

- Passport Office - if there was fraud involving your passport
  http://travel.state.gov/passport

- Social Security Administration - if there was fraud involving your Social Security Number
  www.saa.gov

- U.S. Postal Service - if someone stole your mail or changed your mailing address
  www.postalinspectors.uspis.gov

- U.S. Secret Service - if someone committed credit card fraud in your name
  www.secretservice.gov

- Federal Trade Commission - to file complaints and to get information to repair your credit
  www.ftc.gov

Sample Letter to Collections Agency/Creditor

(Date) __________________

To Whom it May Concern,

I received your letter demanding payment of $__________

I did not open this account or incur this unpaid balance. Someone, other than myself, wrongfully used my personal information to obtain a line of credit/services. Your company extended a line of credit/services to someone, other than myself.

You are hereby notified that on this date _______, I filed an Identity Theft report with the Orange County Sheriff’s Department. The case number is ____________.

Thank you,

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