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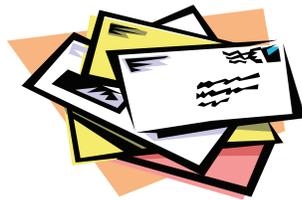
Identity Theft

QUARTER II
JUNE
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When the Cat's Away, the Mice Will Play...

It's play time! Summer is the season for the long awaited vacations! Summer gives us a chance to escape the day-to-day stressors - work, school, household chores, our hectic schedules... But identity thieves don't take vacations – they know that summer is the perfect time to strike.

You probably take certain precautions already to protect your identity, such as shredding receipts and unsolicited credit card offers; giving out personal information such as your Social Security number only when absolutely necessary; and checking your credit report on a regular basis for unusual activity or fraudulent accounts.



Here are some extra measures you should take to make sure the memories of your summer vacation aren't ruined by identity theft:

* Make sure that when you ask a friend or neighbor to keep an eye on your house, it's someone you can really trust. Believe it or not identity theft is often perpetrated by people who know their victims. According to a study conducted by the Council of Better Business Bureaus and Javelin Strategy & Research nearly half (47%) of the ID theft crimes are committed by someone a victim knows.

* While you're away ask the Post Office to hold your mail for the duration of the trip. A mailbox stuffed with bills, bank statements and pre-approved credit card offers is a sure fire sign that you're away giving thieves an opportunity to prey on your personal information. If you have a newspaper subscription, suspend its delivery also for the time you're away.

* Consider using a locked filing cabinet, fire box or safety deposit box to protect sensitive information that you leave at home while you're gone. These items can include your passport; Social Security cards; birth certificates; bank account statements; extra credit cards; and social security card.

* While away, guard your personal information, especially if traveling with a tour group. Tour groups scream out "TOURISTS" and pickpockets are masters in their field. If you aren't taking your purse or wallet on the day's outing, secure them in a locked suitcase or hotel safe, if one is available to you. Use a **travel wallet** (like the one enclosed) to keep all the necessary cash and credit cards you will need for the day on you and around your neck at all times. If you rent a car, do not leave the rental agreement, which often contains personal information, in the glove compartment, but rather put it with your other personal items in a secure location.

* Don't use Internet cafes for bill paying or other tasks that could reveal personal information.

* Monitor your credit regularly after a trip; by checking your credit and credit card or bank statements you'll be able to react faster and lower potential losses from identity theft. Credit monitoring products can serve as early warning systems to alert you to potentially fraudulent activities. www.AnnualCreditReport.com gives you one free credit report per year.

Remember, it pays off to be proactive, so keep these tips in mind as you travel. *Don't let identity thieves put a damper on your summer fun...*

Vacation Checklist:

House	<input type="checkbox"/>
Important Papers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mail	<input type="checkbox"/>
Newspaper Subscription	<input type="checkbox"/>
Credit Card/ Bank Statements	<input type="checkbox"/>
Travel Documents	<input type="checkbox"/>
Credit Check	<input type="checkbox"/>

