

# IDENTITY THEFT INFORMATION PROVIDED BY LAKE REGION BANK

WITH LINKS TO INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE  
CONSUMER FINANCE PROTECTION AGENCY

## What is identity theft?

[What is identity theft? | Consumer Financial Protection Bureau](#)

Identity theft occurs when someone steals your identity to commit fraud.

When someone steals your identity to commit fraud it can mean using personal information without your permission, such as:

- Your name
- Social Security or Medicare number
- Birthdate
- Enough of any combination of the above along with existing account numbers to obtain new accounts or access multiple existing accounts (beyond check fraud on a single account, debit card fraud on a single card number, etc.)

Identity thieves may rent apartments, get credit cards, receive government benefits or tax refunds, or open other accounts in your name. You may not find out about the theft until you [review your credit report](#) or a credit card statement and notice accounts you didn't open or charges you didn't make, or until you're contacted by a debt collector.

If you've been a victim of identity theft, visit [IdentityTheft.gov](https://www.identitytheft.gov), the federal government's one-stop resource to help you report and recover from identity theft. IdentityTheft.gov allows you to report identity theft, while also receiving an Identity Theft Report and a personal recovery plan that walks you through the steps to take. For example, you can [contact the nationwide credit reporting companies for help](#) with placing fraud alerts or security freezes and blocking or removing fraudulent debts.

## What do I do if I've been a victim of identity theft?

[What do I do if I've been a victim of identity theft? | Consumer Financial Protection Bureau](#)

If you are a victim of identity theft, place fraud alerts or security freezes on your credit reports, file a report at IdentityTheft.gov, and take steps to protect your credit history and finances.

### Closing accounts and contacting the police

If you are currently dealing with identity theft, there are important steps you can take right away—including closing your accounts and reporting the identity theft to the police. Visit the [Department of Justice](#) and [IdentityTheft.gov](https://www.identitytheft.gov) to learn more.

### Protecting your credit

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Contact any one of these three nationwide credit reporting companies [Equifax](#), [Experian](#), or [Transunion](#) to place fraud alerts and security freezes on your credit reports:

Online	By calling	By mail
<a href="#">Equifax Alerts</a>	(800) 685-1111	Equifax Consumer Fraud Division, PO Box 740256, Atlanta, GA 30374
<a href="#">Experian Fraud Center</a>	(888) 397-3742	Experian, P.O. Box 9554, Allen, TX 75013
<a href="#">Transunion Fraud Alert</a>	(888) 909-8872	TransUnion Fraud Victim Assistance Department, P.O. Box 2000, Chester, PA 19016

### Fraud alerts

A fraud alert requires creditors, who check your credit report, to take steps to verify your identity before they open a new account, issue an additional card, or increase the credit limit on an existing account based on a consumer's request. When you place a fraud alert on your [credit report](#) at one of the nationwide credit reporting companies, it must notify the others.

There are two main types of fraud alerts: initial fraud alerts and extended alerts. Servicemembers also have the option of an active-duty alert.

### Initial fraud alerts

You can place an initial fraud alert on your credit report if you believe you are, or are about to become, a victim of fraud or [identity theft](#). Credit reporting companies will keep that alert on your file for one year. After one year, the initial fraud alert will expire and be removed. You have the option to place another fraud alert at that time.

When you place an initial fraud alert, creditors must take reasonable steps to make sure the person making a new credit request in your name is you before granting that request. If you provide a telephone number, the creditor must call you or take reasonable steps to verify whether you are the person making the credit request before granting the credit.

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When you place an initial fraud alert on your file, you're entitled to order one free copy of your credit report from each of the nationwide credit reporting companies. These free reports do not count as your [free annual report from each credit reporting company](#).

## Extended alerts

If your identity has been stolen and you have filed an identity theft report at [IdentityTheft.gov](https://www.identitytheft.gov), you can place an extended alert on your credit report. An extended alert is good for seven years. If you have an extended alert, a creditor must contact you in person, on the telephone, or through another contact method you choose to verify if you are the person making the credit request before extending new credit.

When you place an extended fraud alert on your file, you're entitled to order two free copies of your credit report from each nationwide credit reporting company over a 12- month period. Your name will also be removed for five years from the nationwide credit reporting companies' pre-screen marketing lists for credit offers and insurance.

## Active-duty alerts

Servicemembers in the armed forces have an additional option available to them: active-duty alerts, which protect servicemembers while they are on active duty and assigned away from their usual duty station. This alert requires businesses to take reasonable steps to verify your identity before issuing credit in your name. These alerts last for 12 months, unless you request that the alert be removed sooner. If your deployment lasts longer than 12 months, you may place another alert on your credit file.

When you place an active-duty alert on your credit report, creditors must take reasonable steps to make sure the person making the request is you before they open an account, issue an additional credit card on an existing account, or increase the credit limit on your existing account. Your name will also be removed for two years from the nationwide credit reporting companies' pre-screen marketing lists for credit offers and insurance.

Since it may be very difficult to contact you directly if you are deployed, you can assign a personal representative to answer for you, or to place or remove an active-duty alert.

## Security freezes

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Under federal law, you can freeze and unfreeze your credit record for free at the three nationwide credit reporting companies – Experian, TransUnion, and Equifax. A [security freeze](#), also called a credit freeze, stops new creditors from accessing your credit file until you lift the freeze. The federal law requiring free security freezes does not apply to someone who requests your credit report for employment, tenant-screening, or insurance purposes.

Unlike fraud alerts, if you place a security freeze with one credit reporting company, they will not notify the other credit reporting companies. You must contact each credit reporting company individually if you would like to place a security freeze with all three nationwide credit reporting companies.

Because most businesses will not open credit accounts without checking your credit report, a freeze can stop identity thieves from opening new accounts in your name. Be mindful that a freeze doesn't prevent identity thieves from taking over existing accounts.

## **Blocking or removing fraudulent information from your consumer report**

If you've been a victim of identity theft, you can also get credit reporting companies to remove fraudulent information and debts from your credit report, which is called blocking. To do this, you must send the credit reporting companies:

- An identity theft report, which can be done through [IdentityTheft.gov](#)
- Proof of your identity
- A letter identifying the fraudulent debts and information on your credit report

Through [IdentityTheft.gov](#), you can also get a [sample letter](#) to send to the credit reporting companies. Remember that you can use identity theft reports only for debts that are the result of identity theft. Credit reporting companies may decline to block or rescind a block if you make a material misrepresentation of fact about being a victim of identity theft or if you got goods, services, or money as a result of the blocked transaction.

Within four business days after receiving your request, the credit reporting company must block that information from your credit report. In addition, they must tell the companies that provided the information that someone stole your identity. Once notified, creditors can't turn identity theft-related debts over to debt collectors.