Identity Theft Awareness

Identity theft is a serious crime. People whose identities have been stolen can spend months or years—and their hard earned money—cleaning up the mess the thieves have made of their good names and credit reports. Some victims have lost job opportunities, housing or cars, or even been arrested for crimes they didn’t commit.

How Identity Theft Occurs:
Skilled identity thieves use many methods to gain access to your personal information. For example:

- They get information from businesses or other institutions by stealing records from their employer, bribing an employee who has access to these records, or hacking into the organization’s computers.
- They rummage through personal or business trash, in a practice known as “dumpster diving.”
- They obtain credit reports by abusing their employer’s authorized access to credit reports or by posing as a landlord, employer, or someone else who may have a legal right to the information.
- They steal credit and debit cards numbers as your card is processed by using a special information storage device in practice known as “skimming.”
- They steal wallets and purses containing identification and credit and bank cards.
- They steal mail, including bank and credit card statements, pre-approved credit offers, new checks, or tax information.
- They complete a “change of address form” to divert your mail to another location.
- They steal personal information from your home.
- They scam information from you by posing as a legitimate business person or government official.

Once Identity Thieves Have Your Personal Information, They May:

- Go on spending sprees using your credit and debit card account numbers to buy “big-ticket” items like computers, that they can easily sell.
- Open new credit card accounts, using your name, date of birth, and SSN. When they don’t pay the bills, the delinquent account is reported on your credit report.
- Change the mailing address on your credit card account. The imposter then runs up charges on the account. Because the bills sent to the new address, it may take some time before you realize there’s a problem.
- Take out auto loans in your name.
- Establish phone or wireless service in your name.
- Use counterfeit checks or debit cards to drain your bank account.
- File for bankruptcy under your name to avoid paying debts they’ve incurred, or to avoid eviction.
- Give your name to the police during an arrest. If they are released and don’t show up for their court dates, an arrest warrant could be issued in your name.

Protecting Your Personal Information:

- Place passwords on your credit card, bank and phone accounts. Do not use easily available information like your mother’s maiden name, DOB, the last four digits of your SSN, your phone number, or a series of consecutive numbers. When you're asked for your mother’s maiden name on an application for a new account, try using a password instead.
Identity Theft Awareness (cont’d)

- Secure personal information in your home, especially if you have roommates, employ outside help, or are having service work done in your home.
- Don’t give out personal information on the phone, through the mail, or over the internet unless you’ve initiated the contact or are sure you know with whom you’re dealing.
- Guard your mail and trash from theft. Deposit outgoing mail in post office collection boxes, at your local post office collection boxes or at your local post office instead of an unsecured mailbox. Remove mail from your mailbox promptly. If you’re planning to be away from home and can’t pick up your mail, call the U.S Postal Service at 1-800-275-8777 to ask for a vacation hold. To thwart a thief who may pick through your trash or recycling bins, tear or shred your charge receipts, copies of credit applications or offers, insurance forms, physician statements, checks and bank statements, and expired charge cards.
- Update your virus protection software regularly.
- Don’t download files from strangers or click on hyperlinks from people you don’t know.
- Use a firewall, especially if you have a high-speed or “always on” connection to the internet.
- Use a secure browser—software that encrypts or scrambles information you send over the internet—to protect your online transactions.
- Do not store financial information on your laptop unless absolutely necessary.
- Avoid using an automatic log-in feature that saves your user name and password. Always log off your computer when you’re finished.

If Your Identity Is Stolen:
- Place a fraud alert on your credit reports and review your credit reports.
  - Equifax: 1-800-525-6285; www.equifax.com
  - Experian: 1-888-EXPERIAN (397-3742); www.experian.com
  - TransUnion: 1-800-680-7289; www.transunion.com
- Close accounts that have been tampered with or opened fraudulently.
- File a report with your local police or the police in the community where the identity theft took place.
- File a compliant with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC).
- For more information on identity theft, visit www.consumer.gov/idtheft.

Public Safety Spotlight

Sergeant Chris Ovenden of the Alexandria Campus has been with the NOVA Police Department since 2004 and has been a Police Sergeant since 2010. Most of the NOVA community knows Sergeant Ovenden through the many SAFE- Women’s Self-Defense classes he has instructed over the years. Along with being the Alexandria campus police supervisor, he has assisted in many cases to include recovering thousands of dollars worth of property for the college and its citizens through various larceny related investigations. Our late Assistant Chief of Police, Jerry Tolson, an award winning investigator in his own right, referred to Sergeant Ovenden as his “bloodhound”; bad guys could run, but they couldn't hide when Sergeant Ovenden was on the job.
Police Safety Outreach  
(Active Shooter Awareness Training )

Give us 30 minutes to prepare you with strategies and tactics to maximize your chances of surviving an Active Shooter incident. For more information on Active Shooter response considerations, check out [http://www.nvcc.edu/current-students/police/doc/Are-You-Prepared-for-an-Active%20Shooter-Incident.pdf](http://www.nvcc.edu/current-students/police/doc/Are-You-Prepared-for-an-Active%20Shooter-Incident.pdf)

**Topics include:**

- What is an Active Shooter?
- Statistics/case studies
- Tips on how to protect yourself and others
- Resources

**Dates/Times**

(All training will be held from 12 PM—1 PM) *Locations will be provided upon registration.*

- Annandale– September 16
- Alexandria– September 17
- Woodbridge– September 18
- Manassas– September 19
- Loudoun– September 20
- Medical Education– September 23

The training is open to all. Please RSVP to Officer Tony Ong, NOVA Police Community Outreach Officer, via e-mail ([Tong@nvcc.edu](mailto:Tong@nvcc.edu)).
Upcoming NOVA Police Training

NOVA C-CERT Day Coming August 12th

Are you a C-CERT member and eager to grab your green backpack to practice your fire safety, search and rescue, and medical operations skills? You can, at NOVA’s C-CERT Day, Monday, August 12th at the Manassas Campus.

NOVA’s Campus Community Emergency Response Team (C-CERT) Day will allow team members to increase their knowledge of campus-level C-CERT operations. Morning sessions will cover C-CERT Flood Response or C-CERT Crowd and Traffic Management. Team members can choose the workshop that interests them. Then, you will hone your basic C-CERT skills and newly-learned workshop skills in the afternoon. And yes, lunch will be provided!

All C-CERT members are encouraged to participate and sign up on NOVA Academy by August 7th.

Not a C-CERT member? Do you want to be better prepared for an emergency? If so, watch your email. NOVA’s Office of Emergency Management and Planning is organizing future C-CERT classes.

Community Emergency Response Team (C-CERT) Program educates people about disaster preparedness for potential campus hazards and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. C-CERT members can assist campus and neighboring communities following an event when professional responders are not immediately available.

If you have questions about this training, contact OEMP, at oemp@nvcc.edu.