# MANAGING YOUR FINANCES

## Safety Tips To Fight Identity Fraud

(NAPSA)—When it comes to identity fraud, there's good news and bad news. The bad news is the number of victims is at its second highest level in six years; the good news, the amount stolen is at its lowest in the past six years, according to Javelin Strategy & Research. Identity fraud remains a serious issue as fraudsters have stolen $112 billion from consumers in the past six years. That equals $35,600 stolen per minute, or enough to pay for four years of college in just four minutes.

Here are six safety tips to help protect you from identity fraud:

**1. Secure your mobile device.** Smartphones and tablets are high-profile targets for cybercrooks and thieves alike. To keep criminals from getting their hands on your valuable personal information, apply software updates as soon as they become available and take advantage of the security capabilities built into Android and iOS devices, such as protecting the device with a passcode or biometric (for example, a fingerprint), and the ability to encrypt and remotely wipe the contents of the device in the event it is stolen.

**2. Exercise good password habits.** Passwords have remained the de facto first line of defense for most online accounts, which has motivated criminals to compromise them whenever possible. Using strong, unique, regularly updated passwords helps reduce the value to fraudsters of passwords stolen in a data breach or through malware. Password managers can provide a convenient way to manage good password hygiene without resorting to writing them down, which could also place them at risk for physical compromise.

**3. Place a security freeze.** If you're not planning on opening new accounts in the near future, a freeze on your credit report can prevent anyone else from opening one in your name. Credit freezes must be placed with all three credit bureaus and prevent everyone except for existing creditors and certain government agencies from accessing your credit report. While costs vary, typically, each bureau costs below $20. Should you need to open an account requiring a credit check, the freeze can be lifted through the credit bureaus.

**4. Sign up for account alerts.** Many financial service providers including depository institutions, credit card issuers and brokerages, and proactive identity theft protection services such as LifeLock give customers the option to get notifications of suspicious activity. These notifications can often be received through e-mail or text message, and some go so far as to let customers specify the scenarios under which they want to be notified, so as to reduce false alarms.

**5. Take data breach notifications seriously.** One in five data breach victims suffered fraud in 2015, rising notably from one in seven in 2014. While data breaches at retailers are an issue, the number of data breaches at government agencies and health care organizations grew dramatically in 2015.

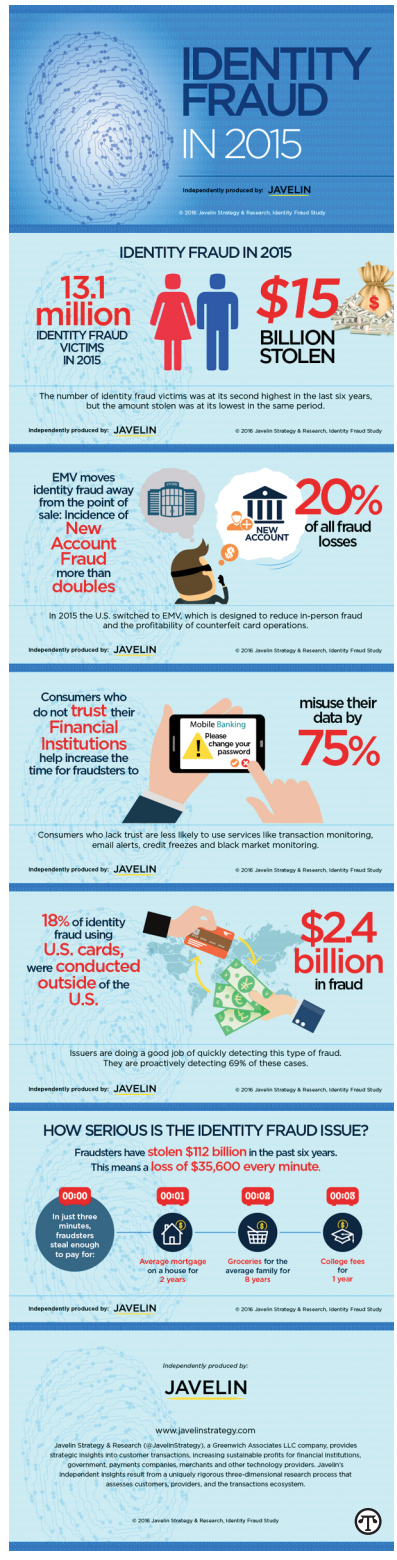
As a result, 64 percent more Social Security numbers were exposed this year, and there was a 110 percent increase in data on medical records made available to fraudsters.

**6. Seek help as soon as fraud is detected.** The more immediate a financial institution, credit card issuer, wireless carrier or other service provider is notified that fraud has occurred on an account, the sooner these organizations can act to limit the damage. Early notification can also help limit the liability of a victim in some cases, as well as allow more time for law enforcement to catch the fraudsters in the act.

Consumers can work in partnership with their financial institutions and providers to help minimize their risk and impact of identity fraud.

### Learn More

For further information, visit Javelin Strategy & Research at www.javelinstrategy.com or LifeLock at www.lifelock.com/risk-calculator for a free, easy-to-use identity fraud risk assessment.




**Research suggests billions of dollars have been stolen from millions of Americans by identity thieves—but you don't have to be among them.**