

SAFETY SENSE

Don't Fall Victim To Identity Theft

(NAPSA)—Identity theft is on the rise in the United States—but there are ways you can reduce your risk.

According to a recent Federal Trade Commission report, nearly 10 million people in the last year alone have been victims of identity theft, costing them \$5 billion in out-of-pocket expenses and costing businesses a total of nearly \$50 billion.

Identity theft occurs when someone fraudulently uses another individual's personal information to apply for a loan, credit card, driver's license or even a job. Identity theft can lead to a ruined credit rating, a tarnished reputation and even wrongful imprisonment. The average victim can spend more than 175 hours of personal time and more than \$800 to clear their names and restore their good credit ratings.

In an effort to help reduce identity theft, the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) and Fellowes, Inc., a leading manufacturer of paper shredders, offer tips on the proper disposal of personal documents.

"A document shredder can be an invaluable tool in ensuring personal records don't end up in the wrong hands," said George Rice, director of public affairs for the NCPC. "We also recommend additional protective actions such as storing personal records in a safe place or using a password protected electronic storage medium," Rice said.

Fellowes has seen a more than 25 percent increase in shredder sales in the past year as more consumers are becoming aware of the



Shred personal documents before you throw them out.

growing threat of identity theft.

Tips on Selecting a Shredder

- Think about how much you'll shred in a day, then double it.
- Consider the varying levels of motor efficiency, duty cycle and speed.
- Some shredders offer a "strip cut," which provides cost-effective security by shredding paper into unreadable strips. Going one step further for added security is the confetti (or cross-cut) shredder, which produces smaller, confetti like pieces.
- Today's shredders do more than just shred documents. For example, Fellowes' newest model, the Powershred PS70-2CD Strip Cut Shredder, is designed to safely shred credit cards, staples, paperclips and even compact discs.

Free Security Kit

Visit www.fellowes.com for more information and to sign up to receive a free "Information Security Kit" filled with more valuable tips to help prevent identity theft.