

Destroy Old Records

Saving old, useless records, applications, forms and other documents containing confidential or otherwise sensitive information can increase your vulnerability to becoming a victim of identity theft. Why make it easier for the criminal? The next time there's a group or community document destruction service offered by your police department or bank, destroy the following:

- Old ATM, bank deposit, and other receipts;
- Old credit card receipts and statements;
- Blank applications for credit cards (pre-approved credit card mail solicitations) and applications for other services; identity thieves and those who sell information to identity thieves would relish the opportunity to open a credit card account or initiate another service in your name;
- Tax records no longer needed. Keep current and old but still-necessary 1040's and other tax records and supporting documentation under lock and key;
- Unnecessary mail; eliminate the surplus mail corner on your kitchen counter;
- Outdated insurance papers;
- Used and unused checks; put away those needed for tax purposes with tax material, which should be well-secured;
- Expired credit cards; obliterate all numbers, signatures, and magnetic strips;
- Second mortgage solicitations (mail); telephone 1-888-5OPTOUT to decrease credit card mail solicitations;
- Any paperwork, including scraps, that contain PINs, passwords/passcodes, SSNs, etc.; memorize them; place SSNs of family members (especially in large families) in safe deposit boxes or home safes (preferably three-position, combination-dial);
- Any other documents that may contain sensitive information and be vulnerable in a home invasion, or to guests, workers, friends of the children, etc.;

Rather than waiting for a group document-destruction opportunity, you may elect to take the bull by the horns and make the identity thief's life more difficult by destroying unneeded sensitive material right now!