



Neighborhood Watch Newsletter



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Protecting Yourself from Identity Theft

Identity (ID) theft is a crime where a thief steals your personal information, such as your full name or social security number, to commit fraud. The identity thief can use your information to fraudulently apply for credit, file taxes, or get medical services. These acts can damage your credit status, and cost you time and money to restore your good name. You may not know that you are the victim of ID theft until you experience a financial consequence (mystery bills, credit collections, denied loans) down the road from actions that the thief has taken with your stolen identity.

Take steps to protect yourself from identity theft:

- Secure your social security number (SSN). **Don't carry your social security card** in your wallet or write your number on your checks. Only give out your SSN when absolutely necessary.
- Don't respond to unsolicited requests for personal information (your name, birthdate, social security number, or bank account number) by phone, mail, or online.
- Collect mail promptly. Place a hold on your mail when you are away from home for several days.
- Pay attention to your billing cycles. If bills or financial statements are late, contact the sender.
- **Enable the security features on mobile devices**, especially if you have contacts, banking websites and applications saved.
- Review your credit card and bank account statements. Promptly compare receipts with account statements. Watch for unauthorized transactions.
- Shred receipts, credit offers, account statements, and expired credit cards, to prevent "dumpster divers" from getting your personal information.
- Store personal information in a safe place at home and at work.
- Install firewalls and virus-detection software on your home computer.
- **Create complex passwords** that identity thieves cannot guess easily. Change your passwords if a company that you do business with has a breach of its databases. Change your passwords routinely.

For additional information on Identity Theft contact the San Gabriel Police Department School and Community Engagement Bureau at 626-451-5455 or the Federal Trade Commission at www.consumer.gov/idtheft

Fireworks illegal in San Gabriel

The Fourth of July holiday is just around the corner. With your help, we can inform our residents that ALL fireworks are illegal in the City of San Gabriel.

If you are not aware, it is also illegal and dangerous to set off bottle rockets, M-80s, Roman candles and firecrackers. These types of fireworks cause the overwhelming majority of injuries and property damage each year.

Check your local newspapers for safe and sane fireworks shows in your area.

For those of you who may have a wood shake roof, the Fire Department recommends that you keep a hose and nozzle handy.

If you suspect illegal fireworks in your neighborhood, call the Fire Department at (626) 308-2880 or the Police Department at (626) 308-2828.

What You Can Do About Mail Theft

1. Never leave mail out for your letter carrier to pick up. In this day and age, the little red flag or mail dangling out of your mailbox is an invitation for mail thieves to steal your mail.
2. If you are going on vacation, fill out a vacation hold form at your post office or have a trusted neighbor or relative pick up your mail.
3. Try to deposit outgoing mail in the Post Office's blue collection boxes as close as possible to the time the mail is collected, or better still, deposit your outgoing mail inside the Post Office.
4. If you did not receive an important piece of mail as expected, first contact the mailer to verify it was mailed -- if it was mailed to you over a week before, ask the Post Office to put a tracer on it.
5. If you see your mail lying outside your mailbox and note that some of it has been rifled through, contact your local Postal Inspector's Office and file a mail theft report.
6. If your bank notifies you that you are overdrawn and you know you aren't, there's a chance some of your checks have been stolen. These could be blank checks you were expecting or checks you mailed to pay your bills. Thieves can alter checks easily. In cases such as these, you should contact your local Postal Inspector's Office and file a mail theft report. If you have photocopies of the stolen checks, please provide them along with your complaint. It is also important to work with your bank when you know your checks, or even your credit cards have been stolen. Postal Inspectors often work closely with bank officials to solve these crimes, especially when your mail is involved.
7. And finally, buy a shredder and shred all envelopes and other identifiable papers before putting them in the trash. Thieves go through trash to find information they can use to assume your financial identity.