

## Cochise County Sheriff's Office Identity Theft & Fraud Investigations

Cochise County, like many other places around the country, has seen a rise in the incidence of identity theft cases during the past five years. Such an increase has resulted in a dramatic increase in the amount of time detectives spend while assisting members of the community restore their identity and credit. Many victims are not interested in seeking prosecution, only to restore their credit and personal identity. All three credit bureaus, (Equifax, TransUnion and Experian) require a police report to start the process to fix a person's credit that was damaged as a result of identity theft, fraud, etc.

As most victims of identity theft are unaware of what steps need to be taken to restore their identity and credit, we've put together the following information to assist you in not only restoring your credit, but also to help our investigators help you more effectively. Without your assistance, many hours of manpower would be spent on subpoenas, mounds of related paperwork, and explaining the process to each individual victim. Helping us reduce the time spent on all this extra paperwork reduces the amount of time it takes to restore your credit/identity.

### This packet provides the following information:

- Two pages of general information and instructions on how a person can fix their identity and credit as well as assist us in prosecuting their case.
- Four pages on the step-by-step process an individual should follow to fix their identity and credit. These pages include information on government, consumer, and credit bureau websites that a victim needs to begin the process of fixing their stolen identity and credit.
- One page describing documentation required for prosecution.
- Four pages containing an Identity Theft Affidavit and 22 questions that provide investigative personnel a general overview of what has occurred.
- A fraudulent account statement page.
- A sample dispute letter for new accounts opened by the identity thief.
- A sample dispute letter for existing accounts that may have been impacted by the identity thief.
- Two pages containing information on the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act of 2003 (FACTA). The act allows victims to request information from creditors and provide that information to our detectives.
- The "notarized" Identity Theft Affidavit (4 pages) and documents obtained by you relating to the fraudulent accounts or Identity theft are the only documents that you need to submit to the Sheriff's Office. The other documents in this packet are for your use and information.

This packet is provided in one of three ways:

1. By the deputy who takes the original report.
2. By downloading a copy from the Cochise County Sheriff's Office public website, [www.cochise.az.gov](http://www.cochise.az.gov)
3. By requesting a packet by mail, if the victim was not given the packet nor could they download it.

Once completed, this packet can be delivered in one of three ways:

1. Submit the "**notarized**" Identity Theft Affidavit (4 pages) and all other documents you have obtained relating to the fraud or identity theft, to the Cochise County Sheriff's Office, Investigations Division.
2. Mail the "**notarized**" Identity Theft Affidavit (4 pages) and all other documents you have obtained relating to the fraud or identity theft, to Cochise County Sheriff's Office, Investigations Division (address provided in instruction portion).
3. Scan in the appropriate documents including a "**notarized**" Identity Theft Affidavit (4 pages), save as a \*.pdf document and email as an attached file to "Sheriff Tips".

# **Cochise County Sheriff's Office**

## **Identity Theft Victim's Packet**

### **Information and Instructions**

This packet should be completed once you have contacted **Cochise County Sheriff's Office** and obtained a police report number related to your identity theft case. To obtain a police report number call the Communication Center at 520-432-9500. Please keep track of your report number as creditors, financial institutions and credit reporting agencies will ask for it.

My Cochise County Sheriff's Office Report Number is:

# \_\_\_\_\_

This packet is for you to keep and contains information to assist you in the correction of your credit and to help ensure that you are not responsible for the debts incurred by the identity thief. In addition, this packet includes information that will allow you to obtain financial records related to the fraudulent accounts and provide those records to law enforcement, without which we cannot conduct an investigation for prosecution. We recognize that some victims are only interested in the correction of their credit and do not necessarily wish for prosecution; therefore, we request that you only submit this packet to Cochise County Sheriff's Office if you desire prosecution.

***It is important to understand that in the event that a suspect is identified and arrested and the case proceeds to court, you as the victim would mostly likely be required to appear and testify in court. You will need to complete the dispute letters and provide us with necessary documentation before we can begin investigating your case for prosecution. Examples of the document evidence we need are listed in this packet. Without document evidence, we cannot begin the investigation. Please write your report number on copies of documents you send us. In identity theft cases it is difficult to identify the suspect(s) as they often use inaccurate information such as addresses and phone numbers. Frequently the investigator cannot find evidence to prove who actually used the victim's name and/or personal information over the phone or internet.***

***\*\*\* It is important to note that even if the suspect cannot be identified for prosecution, it will not affect your ability to correct the fraudulent accounts and remove them from your credit.\*\*\****

***Furthermore, when you report your identity crime to the Cochise County Sheriff's Office, all of the relevant information from your case is entered into our database which will allow us to cross-reference your report with potential suspects who are involved in or arrested on other cases.***

### **NOTE:**

- If you suspect someone is using your personal information for employment and there is no evidence of other identity fraud, please see the section for contacting the **Social Security Administration** under Additional Useful Information. Do not contact the employer directly as they may warn the suspect employee.
- If your name and/or information is used by someone else to avoid a traffic ticket or any criminal prosecution, please contact the agency investigating the original crime. It may not be necessary to complete this packet.

### *Helpful Hints:*

- *Remember that each creditor has different policies and procedures for correcting fraudulent accounts.*
- *Do not provide originals and be sure to keep copies of everything you provide to the creditors or companies involved in the identity theft.*
- *Write down all dates, times and the names of individuals you speak to regarding the identity theft and correction of your credit.*

## **Step 1: Contact your bank and other credit card issuers.**

If the theft involved **existing bank accounts** (checking or savings accounts as well as credit or debit card) you should do the following:

- Close the account that was used fraudulently or put stop payments on all outstanding checks that might have been written without your knowledge.
- Close all credit card accounts that were used fraudulently.
- Close any account accessible by debit card if it has been accessed fraudulently.
- Open up new accounts protected with a secret password or personal identification number (PIN) If the identity theft involved the creation of **new bank accounts**, you should do the following:
- Call the involved financial institution and notify them of the identity theft.
- They will likely require additional notification in writing. (see step 4)

## **Step 2: Contact all three (3) major credit reporting bureaus.**

First request the credit bureaus place a "Fraud Alert" on your file. A fraud alert will put a notice on your credit report that you have been the victim of identity theft. Merchants and financial institutions **may** opt to contact you directly before any new credit is taken out in your name. ***Some states allow for a Security Freeze in which a PIN can be designated on your credit file and subsequently the PIN must then be given in order for credit to be extended. Ask the credit reporting bureaus if your state is participating in the Security Freeze Program.***

[www.scamsafe.com](http://www.scamsafe.com) – provides useful information related to identity theft and indicates which states participate in the Security Freeze program.

[www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com) – provides one free credit report, per credit bureau agency, per year, with subsequent credit reports available at a nominal fee.

The following is a list of the three (3) major credit reporting bureaus for victims to report fraud:

#### **Equifax**

Consumer Fraud Division  
800-525-6285  
P.O. Box 740256  
Atlanta, GA 30374

#### **TransUnion**

Fraud Victim Assistance Dept  
800-680-7289  
P.O. Box 6790  
Fullerton, CA 92834

#### **Experian**

Nat. Consumer Assist  
888-397-3742  
P.O. Box 9530  
Allen, TX 75013

### **Step 3: File a report with the Federal Trade Commission.**

You can go on-line to file an identity theft complaint with the FTC at [www.FTC.gov](http://www.FTC.gov) and click on the Id Theft icon or by calling 1-877-IDTHEFT.

### **Step 4: Contact creditors involved in the Identity Theft by phone and in writing.**

This step involves contacting all the companies or institutions that provided credit or opened new accounts for the suspect or suspects. Some examples include banks, mortgage companies, utility companies, telephone companies, cell phone companies, etc. Provide the creditors with the completed Identity Theft Affidavit (some may require that you use their own affidavit), Letter of Dispute, and a copy of the FACTA Law.

**FTC Identity Theft Affidavit** A copy of the FTC Identity Theft Affidavit can be found at the end of this packet. This is the same affidavit that the FTC makes available to victims of identity theft. The affidavit requests information regarding you as the victim, how the fraud occurred, law enforcement's actions, documentation checklist and Fraudulent Account Statement. **NOTE.** Some creditors, financial institutions, or collection agencies have their own affidavit that you may have to complete.

**Letters of Dispute** Sample copies of the Letters of Dispute can also be found at the end of this packet. **This letter needs to be completed for every creditor involved in the identity theft.** The letter of dispute should contain information related to the fraudulent account(s), your dispute of the account(s), and your request for the information to be corrected. In addition, the letter should reference FACTA and make a request for copies of any and all records related to the fraudulent accounts be provided to you and made available to the Cochise County Sheriff's Office.

**FACTA Law** A portion of the FACTA Law can also be found at the end of this packet. As previously discussed in this packet, FACTA allows for you to obtain copies of any and all records related to the fraudulent accounts. You are then permitted to provide law enforcement with copies of the records you received related to the fraudulent accounts; thereby allowing us to bypass the sometimes difficult process of obtaining subpoenas for the very same information. It also allows you to request the information be made available to the Cochise County Sheriff's Office. We have found it useful to provide a copy of the FACTA Law with the submission of the Identity Theft Affidavit and Letter of Dispute to the individual creditors.

### **Step 5: Submit only the "NOTARIZED" IdentityTheft Affidavit (4 pages) AND copies of all information and records you obtained from the creditors with regard to the fraudulent accounts to:**

**Cochise County Sheriff's Office  
Investigations Division  
100 Colonia de Salud Suite #105  
Sierra Vista, Az 85635**

To avoid confusion and to ensure that all items are forwarded to the assigned detective, we request that you submit everything at once and if possible do not send items separately. Be sure

to write your **police report number** on all items submitted. The types of document evidence needed are listed in this packet. The information can be hand delivered or mailed. **Please remember that some victims are only interested in the correction of their credit and do not necessarily wish for prosecution. Therefore, we request that you only submit this packet to Cochise County Sheriff's Office if you desire prosecution and would be willing and available to appear and testify in court should a suspect be identified and arrested.**

**\*\*\*\*\*Please Note.**

**\*\*\*\*You will be contacted by a detective only if the document evidence you submit leads to the identification and prosecution of a suspect.\*\*\*\*\***

**Additional Useful Information –**

- Post Office** – *If you suspect that your mail has been stolen or diverted with a false change-of-address request, contact your local postal inspector. You can obtain the address and telephone number of the postal inspector for your area at United States Postal Service website: <http://www.usps.com/ncsc/locators/findis.html> or by calling 800-275-8777.*
- Social Security Administration** – *If you suspect that someone is using your social security number to obtain employment, contact the Social Security Administration's fraud hotline at 1-800-269-0271. Order a copy of your Personal Earnings and Benefit Estimate Statement (PEBES) to check the accuracy of your work history on file with the Social Security Administration. You can obtain a PEBES application at your local Social Security office or at <http://www.ssa.gov/online/ssa-7004.pdf>.*
- Internal Revenue Service** – *The IRS Office of Special Investigations can be contacted at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) to report false tax filings, potential criminal violations of the Internal Revenue Code and related financial crimes.*

***If you are contacted by a collection agency - about a debt for which you are not responsible, immediately notify them that you did not create the debt and that you are a victim of identity theft. Follow up with the collection agency and creditor in writing and include a copy of your police report, ID Theft Affidavit, Letter of Dispute and a copy of the FACTA Law.***

## Documentation for Prosecution

**The following items of evidence should be obtained by the victim by using the sample dispute letters to dispute charges and requesting all documentation related to the account(s). \* Without this document evidence, we will not be able to begin an investigation.**

**• If your existing accounts are being accessed, please obtain the following types of documents:**

- Bank statements or bills showing where the transactions occurred
  - Please circle or underline the fraudulent transactions
  - Using a highlighter may make it impossible to read photocopies
  - Please attempt to obtain a physical address for the transactions from your bank.
- Bills from companies showing merchandise ordered
  - Addresses where items were delivered
  - What phone numbers were associated with the order
- Any information from the creditor that shows how or where the account was used
- The name and phone number of any representatives from the businesses you deal with

**• If new accounts have been opened in your name please obtain the following:**

- Bank statements that you may have received for accounts that are not yours
- Credit reports showing the accounts that are not yours
  - Please circle or underline all accounts that are not yours
  - Using a highlighter may make it impossible to read photocopies
- Bills from utilities companies for accounts you did not open
- Letters or documentation from creditors or utilities companies that contain
  - Copies of applications for credit
  - How the account was opened. (in person, over the phone, on internet)
  - Where the account was opened if done in person
  - Where the account is being used (addresses of transactions)
  - Address where any cards, bills, merchandise or correspondence was mailed.
  - Any phone numbers associated with the fraudulent account
- The name or employee number and phone number of any representatives from the businesses you deal with.

**• If someone is using your personal information for employment we will need:**

Copies of Department of Economic Security or Social Security Administration report showing your information being used for employment in Phoenix.

If only your Social Security Number is being used for employment, please provide a **stamped** social security number verification letter from the Social Security Administration that verifies the social security number in question is assigned to you.

**If only a partial account number is listed on the document, please write the entire number on the copy you send to us.**

**Cochise County Sheriff's Office**  
**Identity Theft Affidavit**

(page 1 of 4)

Report Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Deputy's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Victim Informaton:**

1. My full legal name is

\_\_\_\_\_  
(First) (Middle) (Last) (Jr., Sr., III)

2. (If different from above) When the events described in this affidavit took place, I was known as

\_\_\_\_\_  
(First) (Middle) (Last) (Jr., Sr., III)

3. My date of birth is \_\_\_\_\_ My Social Security Number is \_\_\_\_\_  
(day/month/year)

4. My driver's license or identification card state and number are \_\_\_\_\_

5. My current address is

\_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

6. I have lived at this address since \_\_\_\_\_  
(month/year)

7. (If different from above) When the events described in this affidavit took place, my address was \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZipCode \_\_\_\_\_

8. I lived at the address in Item 8 from \_\_\_\_\_ until \_\_\_\_\_  
(month/year) (month/year)

9. Daytime telephone number is ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

10. My evening telephone number is ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_



**How the Fraud Occurred:**

Check all that apply for items 11 – 17:

**Cochise County Sheriff's Office  
Identity Theft Affidavit (page 2 of 4)**

11.  I did not authorize anyone to use my name or personal information to seek the money, credit, loans, goods or services described in this report.
12.  I did not receive any benefit, money, goods or services as a result of the events described in this report.
13.  My identification documents (for example, credit cards; birth certificates; driver's license; Social Security card; etc.) were: stolen lost on or about \_\_\_\_\_  
(day/month/year)
14.  To the best of my knowledge and belief, the following person(s) used my information (for example, my name, address, date of birth, existing account numbers, Social Security number, mother's maiden name, etc.) or identification documents to get money, credit, loans, goods or services without my knowledge or authorization:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (if known)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (if known)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address (if known)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address (if known)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number(s) (if known)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number(s) (if known)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Additional information

\_\_\_\_\_  
Additional information

15.  I do NOT know who used my information or identification documents to get money, credit, loans, goods or services without my knowledge or authorization

16.  Additional comments: (For example, description of the fraud, which documents or information were used or how the identity thief gained access to your information)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Attach additional pages as necessary.)

**Cochise County Sheriff's Office**  
**Identity Theft Affidavit (page 3 of 4)**

17. (check only one)

- I am willing to assist in the prosecution of the person(s) who committed this fraud.
- I am NOT willing to assist in the prosecution of the person(s) who committed this fraud.

18. (check only one)

- I am authorizing the release of this information to law enforcement for the purposes of Assisting them in the investigation and prosecution of the person(s) who committed this fraud.
- I am NOT authorizing the release of this information to law enforcement for the purposes of assisting them in the investigation and prosecution of the person(s) who committed this fraud.

19. (check box / circle correct response)

- I have / I have not reported the events described in this affidavit to the police or other law enforcement agency.
- The police did / did not write a report. *In the event you have contacted the police or other law enforcement agency please complete the following information:*

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(Agency #1) \_\_\_\_\_ (Officer/Agency personnel taking report)

---

(Date of Report) \_\_\_\_\_ (Report number, if any)

---

(Phone number) \_\_\_\_\_ (email address, if any)

---

(Agency #2) \_\_\_\_\_ (Officer/Agency personnel taking report)

---

(Date of Report) \_\_\_\_\_ (Report number, if any)

---

(Phone number) \_\_\_\_\_ (email address, if any)

**Documentation Checklist**

Please indicate the supporting documentation you are able to provide to the companies you plan to notify. Attach copies (NOT originals) to the affidavit before sending it to the companies.

- 20.  A copy of a valid government-issued photo-identification card (for example, your driver's license, state-issued ID card, or your passport.) If you are under 16 and don't have a photo-ID, you may submit a copy of your birth certificate or a copy of your official school records showing your enrollment and place of residence.

## Sample Dispute Letter

Date

Your Name

Your Address, City, State, Zip Code

Complaint Department

Name of Company

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to dispute the following information in my file. I have circled the items I dispute on the attached copy of the report I received.

This item (identify item(s) disputed by name of source, such as creditors or tax court, and identify type of item, such as credit account, judgment, etc.) is (inaccurate or incomplete) because (describe what is inaccurate or incomplete and why). I am requesting that the item be removed (or request another specific change) to correct the information.

Enclosed are copies of (use this sentence if applicable and describe any enclosed documentation, such as a police report, Identity Theft Affidavit, payment records, court documents) supporting my position. Please reinvestigate this (these) matter(s) and (delete or correct) the disputed item(s) as soon as possible.

In addition, pursuant to FACTA..as a victim of identity theft I am requesting that you provide me with copies of any and all applications and business transaction records related to the fraudulent account(s). The copies of the records can be (mailed to me at the address listed below or faxed to the number listed below. **In addition, please make these records available to the Cochise County Sheriff's Office upon their request.**

Sincerely,

Your name

Enclosures: (List what you are enclosing.)

## Sample Dispute Letter For Existing Accounts

Date

Your Name

Your Address

Your City, State, Zip Code

Your Account Number

Name of Creditor

Billing Inquiries

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to dispute a fraudulent (charge or debit) on my account in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_. I am a victim of identity theft, and I did not make this (charge or debit). I am requesting that the (charge be removed or the debit reinstated), that any finance and other charges related to the fraudulent amount be credited, as well, and that I receive an accurate statement.

Enclosed are copies of (use this sentence to describe any enclosed information, such as a police report or Identity Theft Affidavit) supporting my position. Please investigate this matter and correct the fraudulent (charge or debit) as soon as possible.

In addition, pursuant to.....as a victim of identity theft I am requesting that you provide me with copies of any and all applications and business transaction records related to the fraudulent account(s). The copies of the records can be (mailed to me at the address listed below or faxed to the number listed below). **In**

**addition, please make these records available to the Cochise County Sheriff's Office upon their request.**

Sincerely,

Your name

Enclosures: (List what you are enclosing.)

# Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act of 2003

**PUBLIC LAW 108-159 DECEMBER 4, 2003**

## **SEC. 151. SUMMARY OF RIGHTS OF IDENTITY THEFT VICTIMS.**

(a) IN GENERAL-

(1) SUMMARY- Section 609 of the Fair Credit Reporting Act (15 U.S.C. 1681g) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(d) SUMMARY OF RIGHTS OF IDENTITY THEFT VICTIMS-

“(1) IN GENERAL- The Commission, in consultation with the Federal banking agencies and the National Credit Union Administration, shall prepare a model summary of the rights of consumers under this title with respect to the procedures for remedying the effects of fraud or identity theft involving credit, an electronic fund transfer, or an account or transaction at or with a financial institution or other creditor.

“(2) SUMMARY OF RIGHTS AND CONTACT INFORMATION- Beginning 60 days after the date on which the model summary of rights is prescribed in final form by the Commission pursuant to paragraph (1), if any consumer contacts a consumer reporting agency and expresses a belief that the consumer is a victim of fraud or identity theft involving credit, an electronic fund transfer, or an account or transaction at or with a financial institution or other creditor, the consumer reporting agency shall, in addition to any other action that the agency may take, provide the consumer with a summary of rights that contains all of the information required by the Commission under paragraph (1), and information on how to contact the Commission to obtain more detailed information.

“(e) INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO VICTIMS-

“(1) IN GENERAL- For the purpose of documenting fraudulent transactions resulting from identity theft, not later than 30 days after the date of receipt of a request from a victim in accordance with paragraph (3), and subject to verification of the identity of the victim and the claim of identity theft in accordance with paragraph (2), a business entity that has provided credit to, provided for consideration products, goods, or services to, accepted payment from, or otherwise entered into a commercial transaction for consideration with, a person who has allegedly made unauthorized use of the means of identification of the victim, shall provide a copy of application and business transaction records in the control of the business entity, whether maintained by the business entity or by another person on behalf of the business entity, evidencing any transaction alleged to be a result of identity theft to--

“(A) the victim;

“(B) any Federal, State, or local government law enforcement agency or officer specified by the victim in such a request; or

“(C) any law enforcement agency investigating the identity theft and authorized by the victim to take receipt of records provided under this subsection.

“(2) VERIFICATION OF IDENTITY AND CLAIM- Before a business entity provides any information under paragraph (1), unless the business entity, at its discretion, otherwise has a high degree of confidence that it knows the identity of the victim making a request under paragraph (1), the victim shall provide to the business entity--

“(A) as proof of positive identification of the victim, at the election of

the business entity--

` (i) the presentation of a government-issued identification card;

` (ii) personally identifying information of the same type as was provided to the business entity by the unauthorized person; or

` (iii) personally identifying information that the business entity typically requests from new applicants or for new transactions, at the time of the victim's request for information, including any documentation described in clauses (i) and (ii); and

` (B) as proof of a claim of identity theft, at the election of the business entity--

` (i) a copy of a police report evidencing the claim of the victim of identity theft; and

` (ii) a properly completed--

` (I) copy of a standardized affidavit of identity theft developed and made available by the Commission; or

` (II) an affidavit of fact that is acceptable to the business entity for that purpose.

` (3) PROCEDURES- The request of a victim under paragraph (1) shall--

` (A) be in writing;

` (B) be mailed to an address specified by the business entity, if any; and

` (C) if asked by the business entity, include relevant information about any transaction alleged to be a result of identity theft to facilitate compliance with this section including--

` (i) if known by the victim (or if readily obtainable by the victim), the date of the application or transaction; and

` (ii) if known by the victim (or if readily obtainable by the victim), any other identifying information such as an account or transaction number.

` (4) NO CHARGE TO VICTIM- Information required to be provided under paragraph (1) shall be so provided without charge.

` (5) AUTHORITY TO DECLINE TO PROVIDE INFORMATION- A business entity may decline to provide information under paragraph (1) if, in the exercise of good faith, the business entity determines that--

` (A) this subsection does not require disclosure of the information;

` (B) after reviewing the information provided pursuant to paragraph (2), the business entity does not have a high degree of confidence in knowing the true identity of the individual requesting the information;

` (C) the request for the information is based on a misrepresentation of fact by the individual requesting the information relevant to the request for information; or

` (D) the information requested is Internet navigational data or similar information about a person's visit to a website or online service.