

Protect Against ID Theft While Preparing Taxes

(NAPSA)—Each year, millions of people who file their taxes leave personal paperwork unknowingly accessible to identity thieves. This year, National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) and Fellowes, Inc. are joining together to alert consumers to organize, file and shred personal information to reduce chances of identity theft during tax time.

According to a recent FTC 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.

The days and weeks leading up to Income Tax Day can be an especially vulnerable time as consumers are reviewing financial information that is highly attrac-

tive to identity thieves, such as bank statements, credit card bills and home mortgage records.

NCPC, the nation's focal point for crime prevention, and Fellowes, Inc., one of the nation's leading manufacturers of paper shredders for home and office use, offer record keeping tips on the proper disposal of tax documents and other personal records—key to reducing this devastating crime.

“Storing only essential personal records and shredding those that can be destroyed can make you and your family less susceptible to identity thieves,” said Darryl Jones, vice president for National Crime Prevention Council.

You can learn more online at www.fellowes.com.

Record Keeping Guidelines

Record Type	Retention Period
Retirement/Savings Plan Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Store quarterly statements from 401(k) or other plans until the annual summary is received. • If all the information is accurate, shred the quarterly statements.
Bank Records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go through checks each year and keep those related to taxes, business expenses, and housing and mortgage payments. • Shred those records that have no long-term importance.
Bills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go through bills once a year, such as at tax time. • When the canceled check from a paid bill has been returned, shred the bill. However, bills for major purchases such as cars, appliances, computers, etc., should be stored in case of loss or damage. Bills for major home improvements should be stored until the house is sold.
Payroll	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Store pay stubs until the annual W-2 form from employer is received. • Verify the information is accurate then shred pay stubs.
Credit Card Receipts, Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Store original receipts until the monthly statement is received. • Verify that the statement information is accurate then shred receipts, except those with product warranties that require receipts.

Source: Fellowes, Inc. and the National Crime Prevention Council

