



Crime Watch

Tips To Protect Yourself From Identity Theft

(NAPSA)—You may get some big surprises on your credit report someday. The report may show a few credit card accounts you never applied for, all charged to the limit, or a cellular phone account with a whopping balance.



They may be convenient, but credit cards expose consumers to potential identity theft.

You may even be shocked to learn you have a new address thousands of miles from your home!

If so, you may be a victim of identity theft, a crime U.S. Postal Inspectors say is sweeping the country. Here are some things you can do to make it more difficult for crooks to steal your name:

- Know when your credit cards expire. If you don't receive them in the mail by the expiration date, call the issuer immediately.
- Don't toss out those credit card statements without shredding them first. Criminals don't necessarily need your credit cards—just your account numbers.
- Shred pre-approved credit card applications before throwing them out. If crooks get a hold of these, they can apply for credit cards in your name without your knowledge.

To learn more, or to report a fraud online, visit the Postal Inspection Service Web site at www.usps.com/postalinspectors.

Note to editor: National Consumer Protection Week is February 3-8 and this article is well suited, though it is evergreen and can be used throughout the year.