

HAS YOUR IDENTITY BEEN STOLEN?

Keep an eye out for these signs.

Presented by Glazer Financial Network

According to data compiled by Norton, cybercrime hits over 74 million Americans annually. You know you have been victimized when you get that courtesy call or email from a bank or credit card issuer - but is there a way you can tell prior to that moment?¹

There are warning signs of cybercrime. Watching out for them just might save you money and headaches. If you notice any of the following conditions, pay attention.

Odd little charges appear on your credit card. Big charges are of course a giveaway, but criminals might first venture some little charges. This often happens when more sophisticated identity thieves buy or obtain credit or debit card numbers through syndicates or online forums (they do exist).

You stop getting credit or debit card statements. A thief may have changed the billing address. What time of the month do these bills arrive? Knowing when may alert you to something fishy.

Weird packages show up at your home or office. "I didn't order a new PC," you react when the truck pulls up at your door. Well, maybe a thief did and forgot to change the default shipping address on your online profile at a retailer.

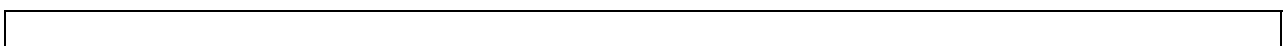
Bizarre calls & emails enter your life. Your friends get spam in their inboxes; you get calls from debt collection agencies. At first, you may categorize the calls as simple mistakes and apologize for the spam. Instead, check it out - it may indicate crime.

Your loan apps get rejected. Your credit score can plunge as a result of a thief's extravagance and detachment. If you can't get a loan or your credit report shows a plunging score, something may be up.

Victimization can be quite subtle. Some identity thieves never progress to shopping sprees or draining bank balances. They have other goals in mind, just as ignoble.

Some people steal personal information so that they can hide from creditors. They would like to plug in your address or phone number on assorted financial, federal and state documents for purposes of evasion as well as future opportunity. If you suspect this may be happening, file an identity theft report with the U.S. Postal Service (or a police report, but some identity theft experts think notifying the USPS may be just as effective). You can also let bill collectors who mistakenly call know that you have done so, out of a belief that you have been victimized.²

Tax refund identity theft rose 97% last year. The Taxpayer Advocate Service (an independent agency within the Internal Revenue Service) looked into more than



34,000 cases of such theft in fiscal year 2011, nearly double the amount from fiscal year 2010. Certain taxpayers logged into the IRS website this year to see the status of their refunds only to be asked to verify essential information. Identity thieves had filed online income tax returns in their name and using their Social Security numbers, but the crooks had directed the tax refunds toward new addresses. The IRS is finding it hard to resolve such issues as speedily as it used to: its workload has increased in recent years, but its funding has not.³

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Citations.

1 - www.dailyfinance.com/2012/07/12/8-signs-your-identity-has-been-compromised/ [7/12/12]

2 - www.credit.com/blog/2012/05/can-you-be-sort-of-an-id-theft-victim/ [5/15/12]

3 - abcnews.go.com/Business/income-tax-identity-theft-needed-social-security-number/story?id=15834826#.UB4G_JGluZQ [3/8/12]

