

Who is behind the promises?



Company Checklist

Many fraud artists invent company names that sound impressive, or are designed to sound similar to existing companies. Confirm that a company is a legitimate business before you give them any personal information.

- **Note** whether the company has a street address (not a post office box alone) and business phone number.
- **Compare** listings with the main office if someone claims to represent a national company. Verify the person is an employee.
- **Ask** the business to provide a copy of any offer or contract in writing and allow time for review, without pressure to close the deal if you aren't ready. Legitimate companies look for long-term relationships, not just quick profits.
- **Be sure** the company provides more than one way to reach a representative. Be wary if the representative can only be reached by leaving a message, or if all contact is by email or fax.
- **Find out** if the company is listed in the yellow pages, or if it has a website.
- **Contact** the appropriate state agency to see if the company is licensed, if required.
- **Check** the company's complaint record with the consumer affairs department of the state attorney general's office.
- **Avoid** businesses that solicit door-to-door, via email or fax; anyone who pressures you to make immediate decisions; and anyone who offers good "deals" and long-term guarantees ONLY if you act quickly.
- **Pay attention** to your instincts. If a deal seems too good to be true, it often is.

Don't share your personal information with anyone you don't know and trust.

Are you a victim of Identity Theft or Identity Fraud?

The Colorado Attorney General's office has an "*Identity Theft Repair Kit*" available on line at: www.ago.state.co.us/idtheft/IDTheft.cfm

For more information on these and other consumer protection tips, contact these divisions of the **Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies:**

Division of Banking

1560 Broadway, Suite 975
Denver, CO 80202
(303) 894-7575 — Phone
(303) 894-7570 — Fax
Email: banking@dora.state.co.us

Division of Financial Services

1560 Broadway, Suite 950
Denver, CO 80202
(303) 894-2336 — Phone
(303) 894-7886 — Fax
Email: financialservices@dora.state.co.us

Division of Insurance

1560 Broadway, Suite 850
Denver, CO 80202
(303) 894-7499 — Phone
(303) 894-7455 — Fax
(303) 894-7490 — Consumer Information
(800) 930-3745 — Toll-Free (outside Denver)
Email: insurance@dora.state.co.us

Division of Securities

1560 Broadway, Suite 900
Denver, CO 80202
(303) 894-2320 - Phone
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IDENTITY THEFT & IDENTITY FRAUD



PROTECTING YOUR ASSETS AND YOUR REPUTATION

A joint publication by:

**Division of Banking
Division of Insurance
Division of Securities
Division of
Financial Services**



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Department of Regulatory Agencies

Fighting Identity Theft ...

...and Identity Fraud

Do Your Homework

— check out business contacts

What is Identity Theft?

Identity theft is a serious crime that occurs when one person collects identifying information about another individual, and uses that information to do harm by conducting a variety of crimes, often negatively affecting the victim's finances.



Identity theft allows one person to pretend to be someone else, often for financial gain.

With enough personal information about an individual, a person can take over that individual's identity or financial records. For example, the thief can falsify applications for credit cards, withdraw money from bank accounts, take out loans, use telephone calling cards, purchase cell phones and run up charges, or obtain goods and privileges by using another person's credit history and good name.

Often a victim may not become aware of what has happened until the criminal has damaged the victim's assets, credit, and reputation.



Safeguard personal banking information; never share a PIN number or let another person watch over your shoulder.

Guard your personal information

If a purse or wallet is stolen, the driver's license, credit cards and other details can provide easy resources for an identity thief. Minimize the number of cards and personal information you carry with you, so thieves have access to the least possible personal information.

- Guard your Social Security number, credit card numbers, personal identification numbers (PINs), passwords and other personal information.

- Protect incoming and outgoing mail. For example, thieves can steal and change checks in bill envelopes, or take incoming mail and sign up for credit card offers — but reroute to another address.

- Keep your trash "clean" of personal information. Shred credit applications.

- Watch bank statements and credit card bills for unexpected charges.

- Choose passwords and PIN numbers that can't be guessed.



Research shows the average American discards nearly 200 pounds of paper each year — including stacks of unwanted junk mail. Often, junk mail and paper trash includes valuable information about personal identity and should be discarded carefully.

There is a new wave of identity theft and fraud created by people posing as representatives of businesses. Sometimes people pretend to be working for a well-known business, but in fact, have no relationship. You may discover these people are not really associated with the business, or the business itself only exists to collect personal information.

Smart consumers are careful with offers that come through email, by phone, or by fax. These deals may sound "too good to be true," but are often attempts to secure your name, date of birth, social security number and details in order to commit crimes and harm your finances.

Check with the appropriate agency to be sure the company is licensed in Colorado. A business name must be registered with the Secretary of State's office, but registration alone will not tell you if this is a legitimate business. The Department of Regulatory Agencies can tell you if the type of business requires licensing and direct you to the appropriate agency in Colorado.

Ask for written materials to support any offer made to you. Real companies will provide a physical office address (not just a P.O. Box,) local phone numbers, a fax, phone book listing, and often a website. When these listings are missing, it can indicate a new company without a proven history — a warning sign to consumers to proceed with caution.



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