

Warnings Signs of Fraud

****LOOK OUT!****

The warnings signs will vary depending on the type of attempted fraud. For example, a warning sign for telemarketing fraud may include a phone call by an unknown caller asking you to "send money now" to receive an offer. Similarly, a warning sign for identity theft might be a call from someone asking for the digits of your social security number or last known address. More general warning signs may include, receiving unsolicited mail requesting you to send money to a bogus account, losing your credit card or driver's license, and promises made by an individual or company that seem "too good to be true".

Safety Tips for Consumers

1. Be smart on social media. Social media can help you keep up-to-date on your friends lives, but can also help fraudsters stay up-to-date too.
2. Protect online shopping habits. For sites without two-factor authentication, use strong passwords or a password manager to secure accounts.
3. Exercise good password habits. Using strong, unique, regularly updated passwords helps reduce the value to fraudsters of passwords stolen in a data breach or through malware.
4. Place a security freeze on accounts. If you are not planning on opening new accounts in the near future, a freeze on the credit report can prevent anyone else from opening one in your name. *(Credit freezes must be placed with all three credit bureaus and prevents everyone, except for existing creditors and certain government agencies, from accessing your credit report.)*
5. Seek help as soon as fraud is detected.

Resource Information

Arizona Attorney General's Office

(928) 778-1265
www.azag.gov/identity-theft

Department of Justice (DOJ)

<https://www.justice.gov/ust/report-suspected-bankruptcy-fraud>

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

(202) 324-3000
www.stopfraud.gov
<https://tips.fbi.gov>

Federal Trade Commission (FTC)

Identity Theft
(877) 438-4338
www.ftc.gov/idtheft

Federal Trade Commission (FTC)

Mass Marketing/Telemarketing Fraud
(877) 382-4357

Internal Revenue Service (IRS)

Retirement Plan Fraud and Abuse
(410) 962-9547

Social Security Fraud Hotline

(800) 269-0271
www.ssa.gov

U.S. Postal Inspection Service

(877) 876-2455
www.usps.com/postalinspectors

Yavapai County Attorney Office of Victim Services & Victim Compensation Division

(928) 771-3485
www.yavapai.us/coatty/Divisions-Programs/Victim-Services

**Prescott Police Department
Victim Services
222 S. Marina Street
Prescott, AZ 86303
928-777-1988
victimservices@prescott-az.gov**

09/24/20

Fraud

City of Prescott Police Department

Victim Services




CITY OF **PRESCOTT**
ARIZONA

What is Fraud?

Fraud is a broad term that refers to a variety of offenses involving dishonesty or "fraudulent acts". In essence, fraud is the intentional deception of a person or entity by another made for monetary or personal gain.

Fraud offenses always include some sort of false statement, misrepresentation, or deceitful conduct. The main purpose of fraud is to gain something of value (usually money or property) by misleading or deceiving someone into thinking something which the fraud perpetrator knows to be false. While not every instance of dishonesty is fraud, knowing the warning signs may help stop someone from gaining any unfair advantage over your personal, financial, or business affairs.

While the exact wording of fraud charges varies among state and federal laws, the essential elements needed to prove a fraud claim in general include:

- A misrepresentation of a material fact;
- by a person or entity who knows or believes it to be false;
- to a person or entity who justifiably relies on the misrepresentation; and
- actual injury or loss resulting from his or her reliance.

Most states require that each element be proven with "particularity" -- meaning that each and every element must be separately proven for a fraud charge to stand.

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Types of Fraud

There are many types of fraud offenses, several of which occur through the mail, internet, phone, or by wire. Common types include:

- bankruptcy fraud
- tax fraud (a.k.a. tax evasion)
- identity theft
- insurance fraud
- mail fraud
- credit/debit card fraud
- securities fraud
- telemarketing fraud
- wire fraud

I am a Victim of Fraud/Identity Theft

Fraud does not discriminate. Any person, group, business, government, or entity can fall victim to fraud offenses. Oftentimes, fraud victims face a range of emotions, including anger and betrayal toward the perpetrator, shame or guilt, and/or fear and frustration over the loss of money or something of value. If you believe you are a victim of fraud, there are several national and local fraud victims' assistance organizations that may help you.

In many cases, fraud victims do not recover the actual money or property that was lost. However, if you would like to prevent identity theft, and other common fraud violations, you may need to hire a lawyer who knows about the nuances of the laws concerning fraud in your state.

ACTING QUICKLY is the best way to make sure that the crime does not get out of control. It is important to make documentation to support your claims to credit bureaus, creditors, debt collectors or other companies. Follow these four steps to ensure you are protecting yourself from further damage to your identity:

Step 1: CONTACT THE POLICE

File a report with the police department in your area and the area that the theft took place. If you are given a Fraud Packet to fill out, be sure to return the completed packet to the police in a timely manner.

Step 2: CLOSE ACCOUNTS

If any accounts under your name have been tampered with or opened without your consent, immediately close them. Call each bank and company and follow up in writing. Also file a fraud report with the bank if any new accounts have been opened up without your consent.

Step 3: FRAUD ALERT

You must place a fraud alert on your credit file and carefully review your credit report.

Step 4: NOTIFY CREDIT BUREAUS

You should also contact the three major credit bureaus:

EQUIFAX

1-888-766-0008
www.equifax.com

EXPERIAN

1-888-397-3742
www.experian.com

TRANSUNION

1-800-680-7289
www.transunion.com

Additional Options to Consider:

- Fill out the FTC Identity Theft Affidavit.
- File a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission.
- Asking for a credit check via your local financial institution and monitoring for any changes.

For more information please visit the Federal Trade Commission website at <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov>.