Protect Yourself from Identity Theft and Scams

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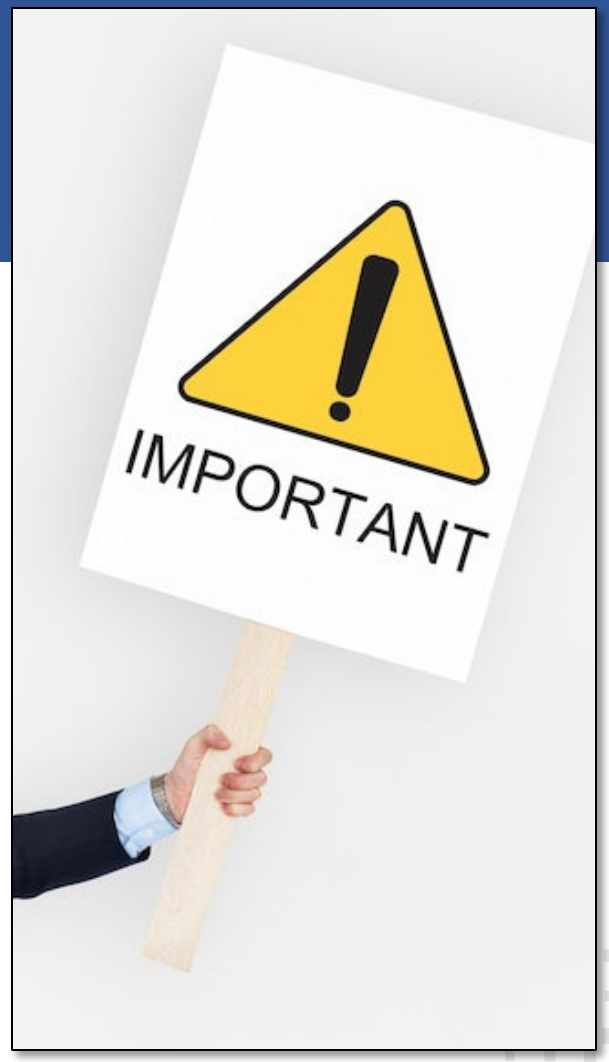
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PROTECTING CONSUMERS
FOSTERING TRUST & INNOVATION
www.DFPI.ca.gov

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The Department of Financial Protection & Innovation

Who Are We? What Is Our Role?

- The DFPI's central purpose is to maintain a fair, healthy, and trusted financial services marketplace for all Californians.
- The Department accomplishes its mission through regulation and enforcement of a variety of financial services, products, and professionals.
- Provide presentations throughout California to inform and protect consumers and to prevent them from falling prey to frauds and scams.
- **Learn more at:** dfpi.ca.gov/consumers

Call us at:

1-800-275-2677

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What is Identity Theft?

Identity theft occurs when someone uses your personal identifying information without your permission, typically to impersonate your, claim your benefits, commit fraud or other financial crimes.

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2025 Identity Theft Statistics

- The FTC logged more than 1.3 million identity theft reports.
- The most common form of identity theft was hijacked and newly opened credit card accounts with 597,770 complaints.
- The most widely used method of identity theft was text message, with average financial losses of $1,000 per victim.
- Emails were the second most widely used method. However, phone calls had the highest financial loss per victim at $1,835.

Source: https://www.experian.com/blogs/ask-experian/identity-theft-statistics/

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Common Information that Identity Thieves Target

- Your contact information (name, address, email, phone number, etc.)
- Social security number
- Driver’s license number
- Financial account numbers (bank, investments, retirement, etc.)
- Medical insurance information
- PINs and passwords
- Other benefits information (pension, retirement, etc.)



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How Identity Thieves Get Your Information

- Imposter scams (phishing)
- Data breaches
- Theft (including mail)
- Dumpster diving
- ATM and point-of-sale skimming
- Malicious software (malware)
- Unsecured Wifi, weak passwords, no MFA
- Buy your data (e.g. data brokers, businesses, etc.)



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Source: https://www.equifax.com/personal/education/identity-theft/articles/-/learn/how-does-identity-theft-happen/

How Identity Thieves Use Your Information

- Open new credit card accounts or loans in your name.
- Make fraudulent withdrawals from your bank accounts.
- Use your existing credit cards.
- Obtain medical services or prescription drugs in your name.
- File a fraudulent tax return to claim your refund.
- Get a job using your identity.
- Present your name to law enforcement if they are arrested.
- Open new leases, utility, or phone accounts.



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Signs You Might Be a Victim of Identity Theft

- Unexpected bills or collection calls.
- Unauthorized charges on your financial statements.
- Receiving credit cards you didn't apply for.
- Denials for loans or credit despite having good credit.
- Missing bills or mail (a thief might have changed your mailing address).
- Unfamiliar accounts or inquiries on your credit report.
- Notification from the IRS that more than one tax return was filed in your name.

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How to Protect Yourself From Identity Theft

- Register for CalPrivacy's DROP
- Protect Yourself from Scams:
  - Use the 6 Layers of Scam Prevention
- Limit personal information on social media
- Shred your personal or financial documents
- Use multifactor authentication
- Check your financial accounts and credit report regularly
- Place a credit freeze on your credit
- Delete unused or old online profiles or accounts

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What to do if You Become a Victim of Identity Theft

- Notify financial institutions, DMV, and other organizations
  - Get new cards with NEW numbers (where applicable)
  - Setup fraud alerts/notifications (where applicable)
- Review all your bank and credit card accounts carefully
- Freeze your credit (at each of the 3 credit bureaus)
- Accept free credit monitoring services if a company offers it.





- Get an Identity Protection PIN from the IRS
  www.irs.gov/identity-theft-fraud-scams/get-an-identity-protection-pin
- Get a personalized recovery plan from
  www.identitytheft.gov

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Scammers Use A.I. to Enhance their Scams



- In 2023, John was contacted by scammers.
- The voice on the phone sounded just like his actual daughter.
- He drove to a meet-up location with cash.
- He did not give away the money because his wife called his actual daughter.

Source: https://www.nbcnews.com/video/ftc-warns-of-voice-simulation-scam-calls-using-ai-167141957861

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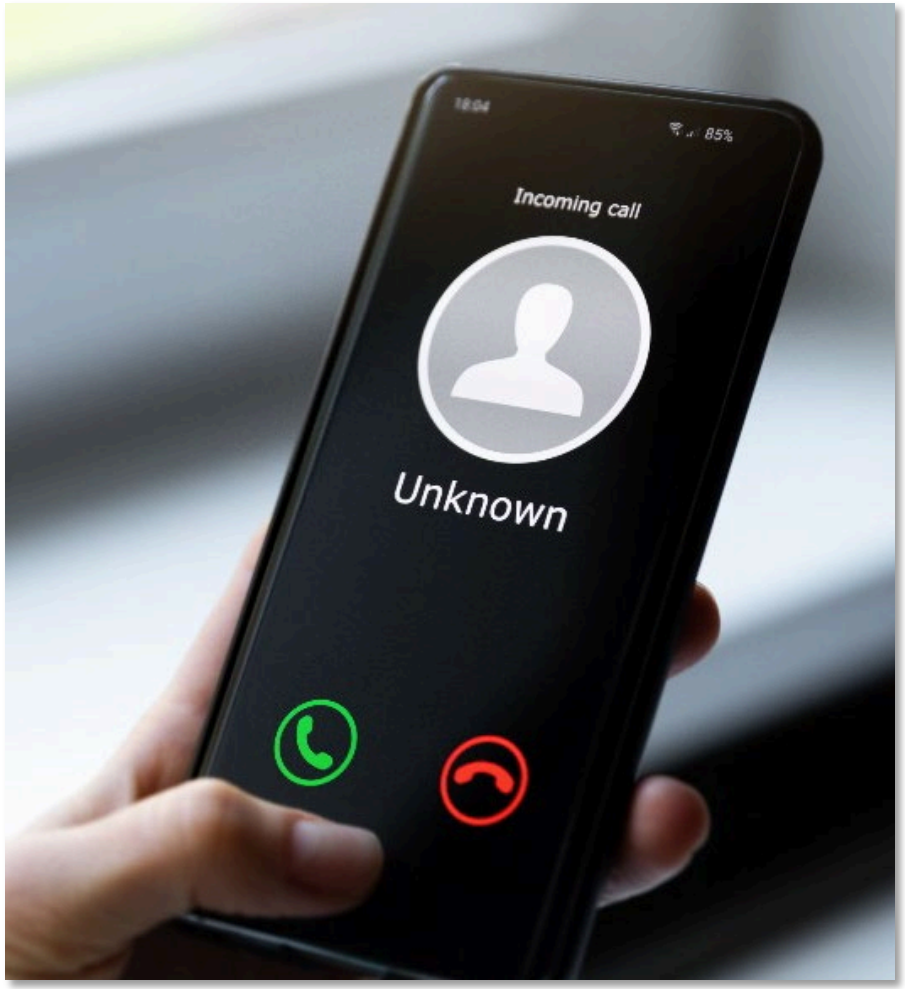
How Can You Protect Yourself from Scams?



6 Layers of Scam Prevention

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1. Do Not Respond to Scammers



Ignore anyone contacting you that you don't know.

- ❑ **Vishing** – Telephone
- ❑ **Phishing -** Computer/Emails
- ❑ **Smishing -** Text Messages
  - ❑ "Click here"
  - ❑ "Callback number"
  - ❑ "Reply back"

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2. Do Your Research!

- Look for **red flags.**
- Verify information.
- Check credentials.
- Go **directly** to the **official** source, company, or website.
- **Get Help**: ask an employee or professional **in person.**

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3. Take Your Time

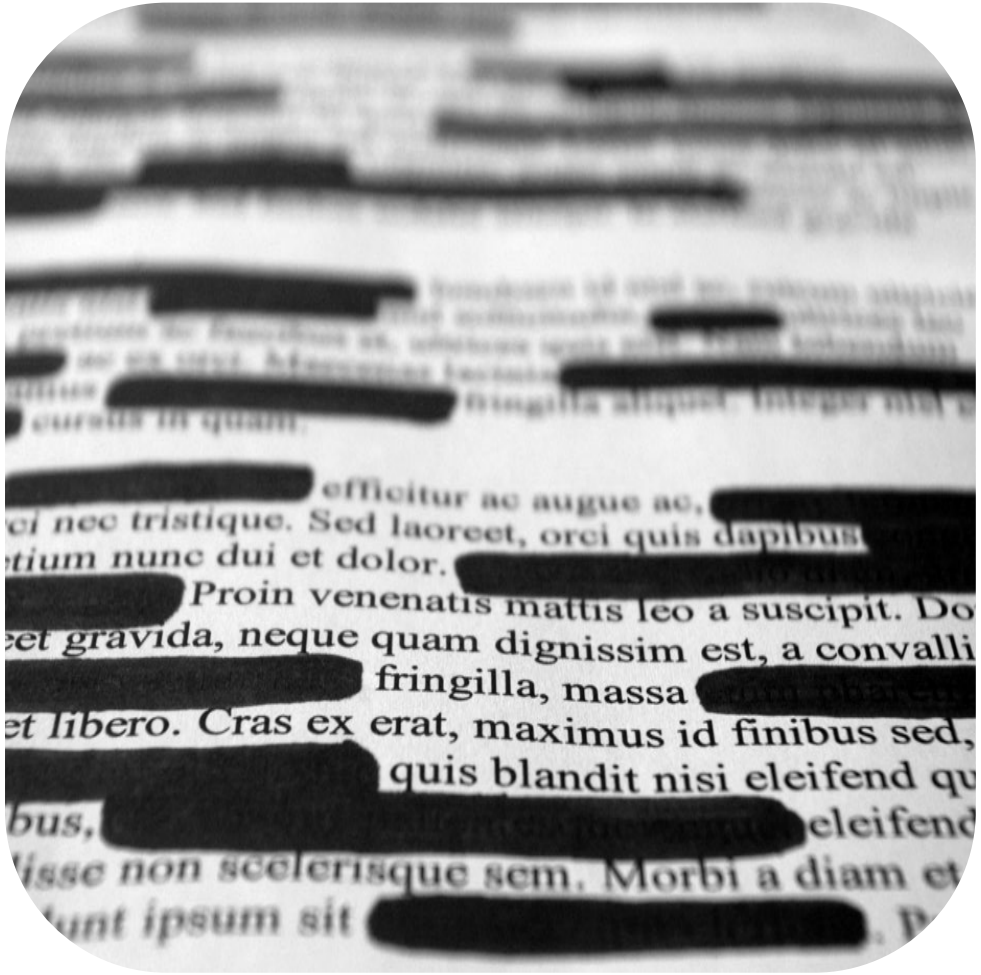
Ignore anyone who is:

- Threatening you
- Giving you a limited-time offer
- Telling you not to share this information with others
- Asking for your personal or financial information

✓ **Do not** make any big financial decisions for at least 24 hours



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4. Do Not Share Your Info

Limit what information you share on:

- Social media
- Websites, forums, communities
- Emails
- Sign-up forms
- Online shopping sites
- Phone apps
- Company or account profiles

***When a company suffers a data breach, the more information you've shared, the more you are exposed.

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5. Talk Someone You Trust

Another person can provide additional perspective and can often point out red flags that you miss.

Talk to someone and get help from:

- Spouse, family, friends
- Financial advisor or professional

*****Consider using a family Challenge and Pass Phrase*****



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6. Stay Vigilant

Regularly check your:

- Financial accounts
- Credit reports

- Delete unused accounts and have your data removed from sites
- Use a shredder to dispose of mail and personal documents
- Deposit important mail directly to the post office
- Don’t just close your Internet browser – log out of websites
- Use anti-theft gel pens for checks and other signature documents

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Don’t forget to Report the Incident

Report this scam to:

- Local authorities
  - Police
  - District attorney’s office
- State authorities
  - DFPI, DCA, AG
- Federal authorities
  - FBI – www.ic3.gov
  - CFPB, SEC, FTC
  - www.reportfraud.ftc.gov



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The DFPI is Here to Protect You and Your Community:

- Contact us if you:
  - Observe or have been a victim of a scam, financial fraud, or abusive business practice.
  - Observe elder financial abuse.
  - Want to report a violation of California financial laws.
  - Have questions about a financial product, professional, or company.
- Call us at: (866) 275-2677
- Submit a complaint online: dfpi.ca.gov/submit-a-complaint

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THANK YOU