

SCAM ALERT #9

New study: Identity theft more prevalent offline

Did you know you are more at risk of having your identity stolen through traditional means – like loss or theft of your wallet – than online methods such as phishing or spyware?

Recent reports indicate that computer-related crimes accounted for just 12%* of all known-cause identity theft in 2004, whereas almost 70%* occurred via offline means.

More common than you think

Although you've probably heard many tips about how to protect yourself from online fraud, it is equally important to be aware of common offline scams. Here are the most common types of offline fraud that occurred in 2004*.

- Loss or theft of wallet or purse
- Acquaintances with access to information
- Corrupt employees with access to information
- Stolen paper mail
- Dumpster diving

Move online to protect yourself

Whenever possible, cancel paper bills and account statements, and choose to receive electronic statements, like SEFCU eStatements. Monitor your SEFCU accounts daily with SEFCU OnLine so you can spot any fraudulent activity as soon as it occurs. Don't share highly sensitive information, such as account numbers and PINs, with family or friends, and be sure to shred any personal paper records you may have.

While there is no guarantee that you will avoid becoming a victim of identity theft, by following these tips, and staying informed, you will be better educated on how to protect your personal, confidential information.

*Javelin Strategy & Research, 2005.



SEFCU is committed to helping members protect themselves against fraud. This is the ninth in a series of SCAM ALERTS to educate members about deceptive activities that could harm members' financial security. While we cannot advise members of every scam, we hope the series will advance awareness of privacy and security issues.

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