



# PRESS RELEASE

Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation

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## **New FDIC Tool Helps Consumers Protect Themselves Against Identity Theft and Suggests Steps They can Take if Victimized**

*Don't Be an On-line Victim: How to Guard Against Internet Thieves and Electronic Scams*

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) today released an on-line multimedia education tool that consumers can use to learn how to better protect their computers and themselves from identity thieves. The presentation also features actions consumers can take if their personal information has been compromised. Identity theft continues to be one of the fastest growing crimes in the United States, and has ranked as one of the top consumer concerns for the past several years. Identity theft is evolving in more complicated ways that make it harder for consumers to protect themselves, and easier for criminals to set up virtual storefronts on the Internet to sell confidential personal information.

Some of the steps outlined in the presentation that consumers can take to help safeguard their computers and their personal information from identity theft are: never provide personal information in response to an unsolicited telephone or Internet request; never provide a password over the phone or in response to an unsolicited Internet request; review account statements regularly to ensure all charges and transactions are correct; and use a firewall and anti-virus and spyware protection software.

One of the more frustrating aspects if identity theft occurs is restoring your good name and credit. If consumers either suspect that their personal information has been compromised, or have been victimized by identity thieves, they should: contact the fraud department at one of the three major credit bureaus and ask that a fraud alert be placed in their file at all three companies; review their credit reports periodically and carefully and look for inconsistencies or red flags such as accounts they didn't open; debts they can't explain or inquiries from companies they haven't contacted, contact the companies



Congress created the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation in 1933 to restore public confidence in the nation's banking system. It promotes the safety and soundness of these institutions by identifying, monitoring and addressing risks to which they are exposed. The FDIC receives no federal tax dollars — insured financial institutions fund its operations.

FDIC press releases and other information are available on the Internet at [www.fdic.gov](http://www.fdic.gov), by subscription electronically (go to [www.fdic.gov/about/subscriptions/index.html](http://www.fdic.gov/about/subscriptions/index.html)) and may also be obtained through the FDIC's Public Information Center (877-275-3342 or 703-562-2200). PR-08-2006

where the fraudulent activity occurred, and follow up any telephone calls in writing; file a police report with local police or the police department in the community where the crime took place and keep a copy of the report; and file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission.

The presentation is on the FDIC's website at <http://www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/guard/index.html>. Financial institutions and others are encouraged to make the link available to their customers from their websites.