

My Protection Options



Helpful links in the event of fraud

Equifax Consumer Services Canada
www.equifax.ca - Click on the *Learn More* button under Credit Education

Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)
www.phonebusters.com or
www.recol.ca

ABCs of Fraud®
www.abcfraud.ca

Interac®
www.interac.ca

I want to keep using my debit and credit cards, but... *how do I protect myself?*

It seems like everyday there is a report about another scam or someone losing scads of money due to fraud. It's like there is a criminal lurking behind every transaction. Before you give up in despair, there are ways to protect yourself and limit your exposure to identity theft.

What is identity theft?

Identity theft occurs when anyone other than you uses your personal information for their gain. Typically, the "theft" results in a financial transaction, but your identity can also be used to secure employment or a passport. Any time identity theft occurs, fraud follows.

How does it happen?

The most common way criminals gain access to your identity is through debit and credit card transactions. There are a number of ways access to your information can be gained and new methods continue to evolve. Criminals replace PIN pads with their own or put a false front on machines to copy card information. Sometimes criminals work with employees by promising them a piece of the action or it may even be employees themselves. At an ATM, fraudsters watch you use your card. Once they know the PIN, they will either steal your card directly from you or distract you and capture it from the machine.

At home your identity can be compromised online as criminals try to collect personal information such as your name, address, social insurance number (SIN), passwords and financial information. In "phishing", the unsuspecting person receives an email directing them to a website that appears to be a legitimate business. However, its only purpose is to confirm or collect your information for fraudulent use, not to provide goods or services. Spyware is like a computer virus that tracks internet usage. While it is most often used for advertising purposes, it can be used to collect personal information like passwords and credit card numbers.

Do I have to be a victim?

The old saying "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" can certainly be applied to protecting your identity. Protect yourself with these simple precautions:

- If your card is lost or stolen call your financial institution immediately to cancel your card.
- Don't give your personal information to any organization who contacts you via email or phone. Don't call the number provided and don't respond to their email.
- Make sure your computer operating system and virus/spy-ware detection tools are up-to-date. Install a firewall to protect your computer from unauthorized access while you are online. Check for and download updates daily.
- Shred or destroy all documents containing personal information before you recycle or throw them away.
- Before getting rid of your computer – erase and remove your hard drive.
- Check all statements as soon as they arrive. Verify all transactions and report any you do not recognize. If your statement appears to have been opened or it just doesn't arrive, call your financial institution immediately and report your concerns.
- Make your passwords complex by using a combination of letters, numbers and symbols. Memorize your passwords or lock them away.
- Lock away all official government documents; birth certificates, SIN cards, passports and citizenship papers. If you need to take them with you – keep a photocopy locked up so that if anything happens you will have the necessary information to report the loss or theft.

As your financial advocate we are here to help – if you have any questions or concerns call us at 1-888-516-6664. Go to www.mycreditunion.ca to get helpful information if you are a victim of identity theft or fraud.

“Her ATM card may have been compromised

so we called to advise her what steps we took to protect her from potential fraud. Together, we went over some tips on how to protect her card and PIN in the future and arranged for a replacement card. She really appreciated the fact we were looking out for her.”

As told by a Credit Union
Member Service Rep



Turn over to read about keeping your money safe while on vacation.

We'll show you how...

Go to mycreditunion.ca for:

- » Vacation Savings with THE EXCHANGE® Network
- » Reporting Identity Theft and Fraud
- » The Personal Insurance – Your Car is Sinking!

Your Money Vacation Check List

It's summertime and you're hitting the road. Reservations are made, bags are packed, the neighbour is feeding the cat and watching the house – but have you taken the necessary steps to make sure your money is safe? Whether you are traveling locally or are heading far from home there are easy steps you can take to ease any financial worries.

Step 1 – Make some calls

Call your financial institution and credit card companies to let them know where and when you will be away. Why is this important? Companies monitor card activity and take note when your activity changes in amount, type or location. If they are unaware of your travel plans they may put a hold on your account or cancel your card permanently. If they know they can use this information when monitoring your account. Forgot to call in advance? You can still do it from the road. Most companies list contact information on the back of their card and website.

When you call ask about your spending limits, especially for your debit card. Getting caught short on cash because you are over your limit is no fun at all, especially on vacation. Whether or not you have your spending limit changed depends on your situation and should be discussed with your financial advisor.

Step 2 – Make payments

If bills are due while you are away pay them early or use TelPay's bill payment service to post-date payments. Having to try to remember to pay the gas bill while you are away is just a hassle. And if you do remember and cannot gain access to your account because of a technical reason you will be stuck with additional fees or worse when you get home.

Step 3 – Make sure you're covered

While travel insurance and travel health insurance does not protect your money directly it does protect you from suffering unnecessary financial losses should anything happen. Before you hit the road, make sure you understand what coverage you have with your credit cards, employee plans and any personal insurance programs to which you belong. If there are gaps in cancellation, purchase, medical and other travel insurances, close them before you go. Travel coverage is available through The Credit Union.

Step 4 – Make a budget

It is easy to get carried away on your vacation and equally easy to put your financial health on the backburner. Remember your vacation is a time to relax and regroup – not to cause future financial problems. So before you head out, understand what your spending limits are and what fits your budget. If you are financing your vacation through credit cards, make sure you have a plan to pay them off as quickly as you can. And before your next vacation, work out a savings plan in advance. Use the **Financial Cardio** test to figure out what you can spend and the **Financial Strength** test to figure out what you need to save to keep your financial health on track while you're away. Get these tests at www.mycreditunion.ca and click on the Get Financially Fit icon.

Step 5 – Make a back-up plan

While credit and debit cards can free you from carrying cash when traveling they are not 100% reliable as systems can go down and cards can get damaged, lost or stolen. Make sure that you have more than one way to access your money. However, do not load up your wallet with cards or cash. Take a debit card and no more than two credit cards (one for regular use and one for emergency backup). Keep everything else locked up at home which will also help keep you on budget. Keep only a small amount of local currency in your wallet at a time. And as old-fashioned as they seem – it is wise to take travelers' cheques with you. They are widely accepted and are not subject to credit approval or system failures. And unlike many cards, are easily replaced if lost or stolen while traveling. If you don't use them, you can save them for another trip or deposit them back into your account when you get home.

The key benefits of group insurance from The Personal



1 Preferred Rates

Only available to members of The Credit Union



2 Solid Protection

For your home and auto with 24/7 emergency assistance



3 Online Services

Get a quote or manage your policy.



4 Plus a little excitement!

You could win one of two \$25,000 cash prizes just by getting an insurance quote!

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www.thepersonal.com/mycreditunion



† Go online for full contest details. Existing policy holders are automatically entered in the contest.



We'll show you how.

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