

# Five Ways to Protect Your Identity



The chance that someone will assume your identity to open fraudulent bank or credit accounts is increasing as thieves become more sophisticated. According to Virginia CPAs, the best way to protect yourself is to try to prevent this from happening in the first place.

1. Order a free copy of your credit report at [www.AnnualCreditReport.com](http://www.AnnualCreditReport.com) and review it for unauthorized accounts.
2. Shred all expired credit cards, as well as pre-screened credit card offers and loan applications you receive in the mail.
3. Carry only those credit and debit cards you need. Don't carry your Social Security card in your wallet.
4. Avoid giving personal information out over the telephone or the Internet unless you initiate the contact.
5. Use passwords on your accounts, but don't use easily accessible ones like your mother's maiden name.

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