

# FINANCIAL CRIMES

## SAFETY AWARENESS TIPS



Financial Crimes threaten the safety of financial systems world-wide. Identity theft and identity fraud are terms used to refer to all types of crimes in which someone wrongfully obtains and uses another person's personal data in some way that involves fraud or deception, typically for economic gain.

### DID YOU KNOW?



The total number of new **fraud incidents** fell between 2019 and 2020. *(Comparitech.com)*



As of 2019, Texas ranks 3rd in the nation for the number of **cybercrime victims** *(Internet Crime Compliant Center).*



**40%** of takeovers happen within **24 hours** of a criminal's access to a victim's account. *(Javelin Research)*

In 2019, there were over **1.6 million fraud reports**, **33%** of these were from people between the **ages of 20 and 29**. *(Federal Trade Commission)*



### 1.3 MILLION

**children's records are stolen** every year. Foster children have an even greater risk as a percentage of all children. *(Identity Theft Resource Center)*



### PREVENTION

Recognize the signs of potential identity theft and be aware of the most common types of financial crimes that occur in Texas.

- **Common Financial Crimes in Texas:** Identity theft, insurance fraud, credit card fraud, embezzlement, and tax fraud. *(via criminallawyersinhouston.com)*
- **Signs:** bank statements do not look right and/or your checks bounce, unfamiliar and unauthorized activity on your credit cards or credit report, bills are missing and/or receive unknown bills, debt collectors call, and unable to file tax returns because someone has already filed under your name.
- **Protect your personal information:** including pin numbers and passwords (it is recommended to change these often), ensure your social security is protected, password protect your mobile devices, and safeguard your mailbox.
- **Order your free credit reports from the 3 major credit bureaus:** Equifax, TransUnion, and Experian that you are entitled to every year to confirm that all the data matches across the board.
- **Review your financial and medical statements** to validate correct transactions and/or claims.



## CONVERSATION

**Minors can be victims of identity theft as well:** Talk to your children about how to react to skeptical online encounters and sharing personal information. Educating yourself and having open conversations with your loved ones about the different steps one can take to prevent becoming a victim of financial crimes is key.

### Ask your student:

- How can you confirm that you have visited a secure website? *Look for a lock symbol or “https” before purchasing from a website or entering personal information.*
- Is it okay to share your social media and other personal accounts information online or with people you know? *No one should share their passwords to any accounts they have.*
- Do you know what can happen if you click on a pop-up ad and/or unfamiliar links? *Your device can get a virus, your identity can be stolen, and you can be exposed to inappropriate content.*

### Ask yourself:

- Do I change my pin number and passwords often?
- Do I check my bank account and medical statements for any unfamiliar transactions or claims?
- Have I received unfamiliar bills?



## PARTNERS & RESOURCES

- **Houston Police Department Cyber & Financial Crimes Division:** Investigates criminal activity carried out through the use of technology and modern telecommunication networks. [https://www.houstontx.gov/police/divisions/cyber\\_&\\_financial\\_crimes/index.htm](https://www.houstontx.gov/police/divisions/cyber_&_financial_crimes/index.htm)
- **Harris County District Attorney Consumer Fraud Division:** Employs Fraud Examiners in the Major Fraud Division, Consumer Fraud, and the Public Integrity Division. <https://app.dao.hctx.net/how-avoid-consumer-fraud>
- **Harris County Sheriff’s Office Financial Crimes Unit** educates the community on financial crime prevention and investigates financial crimes. [https://www.harriscountysoc.org/Programs/programs\\_BurglaryAndFinancialCrimes.aspx](https://www.harriscountysoc.org/Programs/programs_BurglaryAndFinancialCrimes.aspx)
- **AARP** has programs that educate seniors on the costs of financial exploitation and how to prevent it. <https://local.aarp.org/houston-tx/>



## LOCAL OFFICIALS



### Officer

Detains individual and contacts DA to see if they will accept charges. If charges are accepted, arrest is made and officer books individual.



### District Attorney (DA)

Analyze and gather evidence to determine whether or not there are grounds for prosecution. Gives approval for arrest.



### Magistrate

Determines if the individual will be released on bond or detained in jail.



### Judge

Oversees court proceedings.



To schedule a prevention presentation and learn more about financial crimes, fill out our presentation request link here: