

# 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?



**25%** of people who report losing money to fraud say they were tricked into **providing gift card numbers**.

*-FTC, 2021*



**Checks and wire transfers** continue to be the payment methods most impacted by fraud activity.

*-JP Morgan, 2021*



FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center IC3 received a **69% increase** in total complaints from 2019 to 2020.

*-IC3, 2020*



**Bitcoin (BTC)** is the most common ransomware-related payment method in reported transactions.

*-Financial Trends Analysis, 2021*



**The elderly lose** an average of **\$34,200** in reported instances of financial crime.

*-AARP, 2021*

### 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](http://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 three 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_%20and_%20financial_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://harriscountysos.org/Services/BURGLARYANDFINANCIALCRIMES>
- **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

It is important to be aware of what role each entity plays in the fight against human trafficking. From detainment to conviction everyone has a role to play.



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.



Judge

Oversees court proceedings.



Magistrate

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



To schedule a prevention presentation, please fill out our presentation request link here: [https://crime-stoppers.org/presentation\\_request](https://crime-stoppers.org/presentation_request)