Weld County
District Attorney's Office
Nineteenth Judicial District

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How do the thieves steal my personal information?

There are many places someone might have access to your personal identifying information. You may be aware of some of these places and you may be quite surprised by others.

Public records contain quite a bit of your identifying information, including your birth date, marriage information, property ownership and automobiles owned.

Someone looking to steal your identity is looking for even more private and personal information about you, including your social security number, bank account and credit card numbers and more.

Some of the ways these thieves steal this information include:

• **Stealing your purse** or wallet to obtain your social security card, credit cards, driver's license, etc. This may also happen if you have lost your purse or wallet.

• **Stealing mail** being delivered to your home or left out to be picked up. Thieves often steal boxes of checks, outgoing bills, account statements and other mail that contains your personal information. These crooks have been known to drive through neighborhoods looking for mailboxes with the red flag up, telling them there is mail inside, waiting to be stolen.

• **Diverting your mail** to another mailbox using a false "Change-of-Address" request.

• **"Dumpster Diving"** Thieves dig through dumpsters or garbage cans behind homes and businesses looking for discarded checks, bank or credit card statements, medical records, pre-approved credit card offers and anything else they can find.

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• **"Shoulder Surfing"** Thieves watch over your shoulder as you enter your PIN number into an ATM machine or as you key your long-distance calling card number into a pay phone.

• **"Pretext calls"** Thieves will pretend to be someone they're not and call you to "verify" your account information or "confirm" an enrollment or subscription by having you repeat your bank or credit card information over the phone.

• **Using false or misleading internet sites** to collect your personal and financial identifying information.

• **Purchasing personal information** from dishonest employees at companies with whom you do business.

• **Burglarizing homes** looking for purses, wallets, and files containing personal and financial identifying information.

• **Computer hackers** "breaking into" business or personal computers to steal private client files and personal financial information.

• **Phony email or "pop-up" messages** that appear to be from your credit card company, Internet Service Provider or some other entity with whom you do business. These phony messages usually claim some problem with your account and direct you to another website where you will be asked to supply credit card and other personal information.