Jan 30, 2023

Contact Kylie Mason

Phone 850-245-0150

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

CA: Identity Theft Awareness Week



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody is issuing a Consumer Alert to warn Floridians this Identity Theft Awareness Week about the billions of dollars lost to identity theft each year. Identity theft affects one in every 20 Americans each year, accounting for more than $5.8 billion in losses in 2021. Identity theft occurs when someone uses, or attempts to use, the personally identifiable information of another person to commit fraud.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “From children to seniors, no one is immune from identity theft, and that is why it is vital for everyone to take proactive steps to help protect their sensitive information. In recognition of Identity Theft Awareness Week, I am issuing tips and providing resources for Floridians to help them strengthen their online security to better protect personal data and hopefully avoid identity thieves.”

Steps Floridians can take to avoid identity theft:

- Check account statements regularly;
- Consider placing a credit freeze with each of the three major credit-reporting bureaus—Equifax, Experian and TransUnion—so new accounts cannot be opened in your name;
- Obtain free credit reports from each national credit agency once a year;
- Remember, the Internal Revenue Service, and most other government agencies, will never initiate contact via email, text message or social media;
- Use an antivirus program and a firewall, especially when not on an encrypted site or secure connection;

- Refrain from sending or providing personal information to solicitors;
- Avoid public Wi-Fi when accessing personal data;
- Enable multifactor authentication to be checked after a secure, never-reused password is entered;
- Ask questions before providing personal data to anyone, even to a trusted party; and
- Shred or safely burn documents containing personal information.

For more information on how to avoid identity thieves, or what to do if you or someone you know is already a victim of identity theft, check out Attorney General Moody's *Scams at a Glance: Identity Theft* resource by clicking here.

Additionally, the Federal Trade Commission's Consumer.gov website contains a comprehensive guide on explaining what identity theft is, how to recognize it happening and what to do if information is compromised.

Anyone who encounters identity theft should report it to the FTC at IdentityTheft.gov or by calling 1(877) 438-4338.

# # #

The Florida Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division issues Consumer Alerts to inform Floridians of emerging scams, new methods used to commit fraud, increased reports of common scams, or any other deceptive practice. Consumer Alerts are designed to notify Floridians about scams and available refunds in an effort to prevent financial losses or other harm caused by deceptive practices. Anyone encountering a scam should report the incident to the Florida Attorney General's Office by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or visiting MyFloridaLegal.com.