The Arlington County Police Department

Identity Theft Victim's Guide for Businesses

What is Business Identity Theft?

Business identity theft happens when criminals pose as owners or employees of a business to illegally obtain cash, credit, and loans, leaving the victimized business with the debts. Identity thieves can steal a business' identity by gaining access to the business' bank accounts and credit cards or by stealing sensitive company information, such as the tax identification number (TIN) and the owners' personal information. The thieves then open lines of credit or obtain business loans based on the business' identity and creditworthiness. Typically, thieves cash out quickly and go unnoticed until the bills and collection notices arrive at the door of the victimized business, leaving behind debts, damaged credit and a destroyed reputation.

How Can You Prevent Business Identity Theft?

Monitoring your business' credit profile with credit reporting agencies:

Equifax

Web: www.equifax.com/business/

Call: 1-888-407-0359

Experian

Web: www.experian.com/small-business/ or

www.experian.com/business/

Call: 1-888-EXPERIAN (397-3742)

TransUnion

Web: www.transunion.com/business

Call: 1-800-916-8800

- Not transmitting sensitive information, such as bank account information, via email or public websites.
- Obtaining business insurance coverage that covers any potential business identity theft losses.
- Establishing company security policies to aid in safeguarding personal information and strengthening verification protocols in response to specific requests, such as redirecting direct deposits.

What Should You Do If You Become a Victim of Business Identity Theft?

If your company has become a business identity theft victim, you should do the following:

- File a report with your local police department. In Arlington County, a report can be filed online at www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/Police-Department/Online-Police-Reporting-System. Retain a copy of the Identity Theft Report.
- Notify your bank, credit card providers, and other creditors that you may be a business identity theft victim and ask if they have received any recent or unusual charges or orders.
- Report the issue to the credit reporting agencies of Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion.
- Inquire about placing fraud alerts on your business' bank and merchant accounts.
- Report the identity theft to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and include your police report number. A report can be filed at www.identitytheft.gov. The FTC also has free data security resources to help businesses of any size protect their customers and meet their legal obligations.

For additional tips and advice, please visit the Federal Trade Commission's Business Center

www.ftc.gov/tips-advice/business-center