



## Five Ways to Protect Your Identity

Your name is Sally and you're from San Antonio and you're tone deaf. So why is Peter from Pittsburgh racking up an impressive collection of piccolos on Sally's credit card account? Sally may be the victim of identity theft. Texas CPAs give you five ways to protect your identity.

### 1. Order a free copy of your credit report at

[www.AnnualCreditReport.com](http://www.AnnualCreditReport.com).

Review your credit report at least once a year for unauthorized accounts.

### 2. Don't take your personal information out with the trash.

Protect yourself by shredding credit card receipts, old bank statements, bills, pre-approved credit card offers and other documents showing personal financial information.

### 3. Carry only those credit and debit cards, checkbooks and identification you really need.

If your purse or wallet is stolen, you'll minimize your identity theft risk. Above all, don't carry your Social Security card in your wallet. Keep that in a safe place.

### 4. Keep your personal information private.

Avoid giving out personal information like your credit card number over the telephone or the Internet unless you initiate the contact. Some ID thieves pose as landlords, employers or others who you would assume have a legitimate need for your information.

### 5. Be computer safety savvy.

Before you donate your old computer or take it to the dump, delete all personal information. Use special utilities that overwrite the entire hard drive, making the files unrecoverable. Otherwise, deleted files can remain on the computer's hard drive.

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