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**From:** Bill Brauch

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**To:** iowa-idtvac@googlegroups.com

**Cc:** bayers@casscoia.us; nolson@co.marion.ia.us; jaimie.miller@iowacreditunionfoundation.org; lorij@cfiowa.org; Erin.Ohern@policyworksllc.com

**Subject:** This week's Identity Theft Update

## *Identity Theft Update*

Good Morning:

I hope you all are well. This week's "Update" is about safe identity theft practices while traveling. Next week's Update will address being Cyber-Safe while traveling.

### **Don't let Identity Theft Ruin Your Summer Vacation**

Ah, summertime.... Warm days, fun in the sun, and vacations! While you're away from home enjoying some R and R, remember to be alert -- the scammers are always on the prowl. Don't let your guard down while away from home.

Here are some tried-and-true tips to avoid becoming a victim of identity theft while on vacation. Next week we'll focus on how to be cyber-safe while traveling.

- Do not bring your Social Security card with you on your trip. Some people keep them in a purse or wallet. You will not need your Social Security card on your trip. Leave it home, in a secure spot.
- Limit the number of credit and debit cards you bring along. You won't likely need multiple credit cards while traveling. Bring only those you reasonably anticipate using. Let your card issuers know you will be traveling. Many of them have easy-to-use web tools to let them know when and where you'll be traveling.
- Before you go, make copies of the front and back of credit and debit cards you plan to bring along. Keep the copies in a secure place in your home. If you bring the paper copies along on your trip, make sure to never keep the copies with the cards (e.g., don't keep both the paper copies in your purse with your credit cards).
- Use the hotel safe! This should be obvious, but still people leave valuable items out in the open in their rooms while out having fun rather than lock them up in the room safe. Lock up that laptop and I-pad. You don't want the information they contain to fall into the hands of an identity thief!

- Don't disclose too much personal information on your luggage tag. There is no reason for you to put your home address on that tag!! It's great information telling identity and other thieves that you are away from home for a time. Include only your name, telephone number, and perhaps an e-mail address. If you feel you should use a physical address, consider using a work address.
- Finally, securely carry your purses and wallets. Purse snatchers are likely much more interested in your plastic than in any cash you may be carrying. Consider buying a travel wallet or other hidden compartment tools. Think about using a cross-body bag to carry valuables. Don't bring big bills if you anticipate not needing to spend much in cash. Keep lower denominations and lock up what you don't need that day in the room safe.

Vacations are supposed to be fun, and you want them to be as worry-free as possible. Taking these steps before you go will help make sure your personal information is safe and secure while you're away.

Bill Brauch  
Director-Iowa Identity Theft Victim Assistance Coalition  
[Bill@IowaIDTheft.org](mailto:Bill@IowaIDTheft.org)  
515-314-9591



Bill Brauch  
Director-Iowa Identity Theft Victim Assistance Coalition  
[Bill@IowaIDTheft.org](mailto:Bill@IowaIDTheft.org)  
515-314-9591

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