

The Equifax Data Breach May Impact You

Equifax, one of the nation's three major credit reporting agencies, reported a data breach impacting 143 million people. Credit reporting agencies also known as credit bureaus maintain consumers' credit histories based on their borrowing and repayment activity with credit card companies, banks, mortgage companies and other lenders. If you have or had loans or credit cards, you may be impacted by this breach. The information stolen includes names, Social Security numbers, birth dates, addresses and driver's license numbers. Criminals also accessed credit card numbers for 209,000 consumers and personal info on 182,000 consumers involved in credit report disputes.

Hackers have all the necessary information to commit identity theft now and in the future. With so many data breaches in recent years, we need to protect our existing accounts and also protect against new accounts being opened using our info.



Find out about this breach and what to do

Learn more about this data breach: www.equifaxsecurity2017.com

Check if your info has been compromised. Using a secure computer and an encrypted network connection, visit the Equifax website: www.equifaxsecurity2017.com/potential-impact.

Read the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) advice on what to do if your info is compromised: www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2017/09/equifax-data-breach-what-do

Monitor your current accounts

Closely monitor transactions on your credit card, bank and other accounts online as frequently as possible, especially your bank accounts. Immediately dispute any questionable charges and replace potentially compromised cards when necessary.

If you check your accounts online, make sure that you use passphrases for your passwords that are hard to guess with characters, numbers and punctuation.

Use two-factor authentication on your online accounts where it is offered. This way if someone guesses your password, you have another safeguard to prevent someone from accessing your accounts.

If you receive statements by mail, follow up if they don't arrive on time.

Set alerts on your accounts that send you an email or text message when there is a sizable purchase or withdrawal from your account.

Monitor credit reports to identify and respond to new account/loan fraud

In addition to regularly checking all of your existing accounts, it is important to protect against any fraudulent loans, credit cards or accounts being opened in your name. Your credit history or report is maintained by three credit bureaus and tracks your borrowing and repayment activity with credit card companies, banks, mortgage companies and other lenders. Monitoring your credit report allows you to determine if there has been any fraudulent activity that you need to address.

If your info has been compromised or you are concerned, you can place a 90-day temporary fraud alert on your credit reports for **free**. Call one of the three credit bureaus listed below that will notify the other two or submit an online request:

TransUnion 1-800-680-7289 or www.transunion.com/fraud
 Experian 1-888-397-3742 or www.experian.com/fraudalert
 Equifax 1-800-525-6285 or www.alerts.equifax.com/AutoFraud_Online

You will have to provide some personal information in order to set up the alert. The purpose is to notify lenders or other companies to take extra precautions when opening up loans, credit cards and other accounts with your information. If your info has been used for identity theft, you can place a permanent alert on your credit reports. Visit identitytheft.gov for more information.

Order and review your credit reports from each of the three credit bureaus. You can obtain a free one from each bureau every year at www.annualcreditreport.com . Your credit report shows your history of closed and outstanding loans, mortgages, credit cards and other accounts associated with you. Sometimes there are differences in what is listed on your credit reports from each of three bureaus, so review all three of them each year. You can dispute any information that is incorrect or fraudulent with the related bureau. If you would like to order credit reports more frequently than once per year, there are fees for these reports.	
Sign up for credit monitoring service that provides information about activity on your credit reports. Do your research and be sure to use one that immediately notifies you if someone is opening a loan or account using your information. Many services charge a fee .	
You may consider signing up for free credit monitoring for a year with Equifax that is being offered in response to the data breach at www.equifaxsecurity2017.com/enroll . Their free enrollment period ends on November 21, 2017.	
If you sign up for the free Equifax credit monitoring, please remember that the service ends after one year. Thereafter you will need to continue with a credit monitoring service, which may charge a fee. Once your information has been compromised, you need to remain vigilant over time.	
File your taxes early in case your info is used to commit tax refund fraud.	

Freeze your credit reports to prevent fraudulent accounts from being opened

Freezing your credit report with each of the three credit bureaus (CB) means that creditors won't have access to your credit reports if someone tries to open a credit card account or loan using your information. This will make it unlikely that new accounts can be opened. There is a **fee** to freeze your credit reports. If you decide that you want to open up a credit card account or take out a loan, you must, at a minimum, temporarily unfreeze your credit reports. There may be a **fee** to do so. Please keep in mind that if you open a new account such as one with an internet service provider, their representatives may need to do a credit check requiring you to unfreeze your reports.

Find out more about credit freezes: www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0497-credit-freeze-faqs	
Review your credit reports with the three CBs as mentioned previously to ensure that there are no fraudulent accounts opened in your name.	
Freeze your credit report with Equifax CB : www.freeze.equifax.com	
Freeze with TransUnion CB : www.transunion.com/credit-freeze/place-credit-freeze2	
Freeze with Experian CB : www.experian.com/freeze	
Keep the pin numbers (passwords) associated with each credit freeze in a safe place. You will need them if you must unfreeze your credit reports.	

Talk to friends and family about this breach and encourage them to take action!

For information about identity theft prevention, visit www.ftc.gov/idtheft.
 If you have been the victim of identity theft, go to www.identitytheft.gov for assistance.



City of Portland's Crime Prevention Program

Our program provides prevention advice, organizes and trains Portland residents and businesses on crime issues. To connect with a Crime Prevention Program Coordinator in your Portland neighborhood:

- Call 503-823-4064
- Email onicpa@portlandoregon.gov

Request a training at www.portlandoregon.gov/oni/70447