

# Tips for Identity Theft Protection



## Protect Usernames, Passwords & Pins

Keep your usernames, passwords, and PINs private, and don't store them on your hard drive. Create tough-to-crack passwords and PINs, using a minimum of 8 letters and numbers and, if possible, special symbols. Change your passwords often and avoid using the same password for multiple accounts.

## Protect Your Wallet

Protect the personal contents of your wallet and passport from identify theft. Learn more at [www.signalvaultcanada.ca](http://www.signalvaultcanada.ca)

## Protect Your Online Investment Account

Always use your own computer instead of a public or shared one. Confirm you have a secure web connection by looking for a website address starting with <https://> instead of <http://> and a secure symbol such as a key or a closed padlock on your status bar. When you are finished, be sure to completely log out from your browser.

## Safeguard Your Computer

- Install a personal firewall and up-to-date security software.
- Set up your security to receive automatic updates for anti-virus, anti-spam, and spy-ware detection programs.
- If possible, use a Virtual Private Network (VPN) which offers additional protection, which standard networks do not.

## Use Wireless Connections Wisely

- Use encryption software to secure your wireless connection at home.
- Shut off wireless connectivity if you leave your computer unattended.
- If using a hot-spot or an unencrypted wireless connection, disable wireless ad hoc mode to prevent unknown connections along with file and printer sharing capabilities.

## Avoid Bad Situations

- Never respond to emails asking you to reveal personal information such as account numbers, SIN numbers, passwords, or PINs.
- Keep your SIN number private and avoid using it as a username, password, or PIN.
- Be careful when downloading files from sites or engaging with ("clicking on") pop-up ads.
- Delete applications you don't use on your cellphone.
- Shred financial documents and paperwork with personal information before you discard them.

## Keep an Eye on Your Financial Situation

- Always review your monthly account statements and alert your financial institution right away about anything that isn't accurate.
- Store your financial records in a safe place, and shred – never simply throw out – documents containing personal information. Check your credit report annually.