



BUCKS COUNTY Crimes Against Older Adults

TASK FORCE

crimesagainstolderadultsbucks.org

Fraud Alert

December 2011

Credit Card Fraud: 21 Tips to Protect Yourself

During busy holiday shopping seasons, it is important to remember to take precautions when giving out any confidential information (including your credit card number) over the Internet, over the phone or anywhere else for that matter!

21 tips to protect yourself from being a victim of credit card fraud:

1. Keep an eye on your credit card every time you use it, and make sure you get it back as quickly as possible. Try not to let your credit card out of your sight whenever possible.
2. Be very careful to whom you give your credit card. Don't give out your account number over the phone unless you initiate the call and you know the company is reputable.
3. Never respond to emails that request you provide your credit card info via email -- and don't ever respond to emails that ask you to go to a website to verify personal (and credit card) information. These are called 'phishing' scams.
4. Never provide your credit card information on a website that is not a secure site.
5. Sign your credit cards as soon as you receive them.
6. Shred all credit card applications you receive.
7. Don't write your PIN number on your credit card -- or have it anywhere near your credit

card (in the event that your wallet gets stolen).

8. Never leave your credit cards or receipts lying around.
9. Shield your credit card number so that others around you can't copy it or capture it on a cell phone or other camera.
10. Keep a list in a secure place with all of your account numbers and expiration dates, as well as the phone number and address of each bank that has issued you a credit card.
11. Only carry around credit cards that you absolutely need.
12. Open credit card bills promptly and make sure there are no bogus charges. Treat your credit card bill like your checking account -- reconcile it monthly. Save your receipts so you can compare them with your monthly bills.
13. If you find any charges that you don't recognize -- report these charges promptly (and in writing) to the credit card issuer.
14. Always void and destroy incorrect receipts.
15. Shred anything with your credit card number written on it.
16. Never sign a blank credit card receipt. Carefully draw a line through blank portions of the receipt where additional charges could be fraudulently added.
17. Carbon paper is rarely used these days, but if there is a carbon that is used in a credit card transaction, destroy it immediately.
18. Never write your credit card account number in a public place (such as on a postcard or so that it shows through the envelope payment window).
19. Ideally, it's a good idea to carry your credit cards separately from your wallet -- perhaps in a zippered compartment or a small pouch.
20. Never lend a credit card to anyone else.
21. If you move, notify your credit card issuers in advance of your change of address.

If you suspect credit card fraud or if your credit cards are lost or stolen:

Contact the issuer immediately. (Refer to #10 above).

Most credit card companies have toll-free numbers and 24-hour service to deal with these emergencies -- they are eager to avoid credit card fraud.

According to US law, once you have reported the loss or theft of your credit card, you have no more responsibility for unauthorized charges. Further, your maximum liability under federal US law is \$50 per credit card -- and many credit card issuers will even waive that fee for good customers.

If you follow all these tips, it will go a long way in protecting you from credit card fraud. Original Source: <http://scambusters.org/>

BUCKS COUNTY CRIMES AGAINST OLDER ADULTS TASK FORCE

Bucks Co District Attorney's Office
215-348-6344

Bucks Co Area Agency on Aging
215-348-0510

BucksCo Coroner's Office
215-348-3852

Network of Victim Assistance (NOVA)
1-800-675-6900

A Woman's Place (AWP)
1-800-220-8116

Bucks Co Office of Consumer Protection
215-348-6060

Bucks Co Register of Wills
215-348-6265

**US Dept. of Health and Human Services
Investigations, Office of the Inspector General**
1-800-447-8477

www.crimesagainstolderadultsbucks.org
24 - HOUR HOTLINE: 1-800-490-8505

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