

Protect College Students from Identity Theft

August 26, 2016

As summer break comes to a close, college students are preparing to go back to school. Fraudsters are also anticipating this opportunity, as college students are reportedly an appetizing victim for identity thieves. According to a [Javelin Strategy and Research report](#), identity theft amongst people between the ages of 18 and 24 takes the longest to detect – averaging about 132 days. In addition, the average loss amount in this age group was five times higher than any other age group – at \$1,156.

Below are some tips to help protect college students from identity theft:

- **Protect smart devices** – Mobile devices and tablets should be password protected and have tracking software installed in case the device is lost or stolen.
- **Keep sensitive documents safe** – Credit cards, passports and financial records should be stored securely. If you don't have a secure place to store them, consider leaving the documents at home. Shred any documents that have personally identifiable information on them, rather than throwing them in the garbage.
- **Use secure mailing practices** – If anticipating sensitive incoming mail, have it delivered to a parent's address or to a US Postal Service post office box. Ensure sensitive outgoing mail is put directly into a USPS collection box rather than a public mail box.
- **Ensure computers have up-to-date antivirus software installed** – Always update the anti-spyware software on your computer's operating system, which can keep it safe from potential hackers.
- **Carefully review all statements** – Review all credit card, bank account and utility bills to ensure there are no unauthorized charges.

Information provided by TMG's Fraud Prevention.