



**Don't Dismiss that Data Breach Notice:
Advice from ITAC, the Identity Theft Assistance Center**

WASHINGTON, DC, October 20, 2011 – ITAC, the Identity Theft Assistance Center, advises consumers to take action when they receive notice that their personal information has been breached, even if the compromise is unlikely to result in identity theft.

“Identity theft can come from many sources and a data breach notice from one of your account holders is red flag,” said ITAC President Anne Wallace. “Although most breaches do not result in fraud, research shows consumers who receive these notices are more likely to become victims than consumers who do not receive a notice.”

If you receive a data breach notice, ITAC recommends you take the following steps:

- a. Take advantage of any free protection services that are offered.
- b. Place a fraud alert on your credit report. A fraud alert requires lenders to make sure it is actually you apply for credit.
- c. Change your account passwords.

Most states have laws that require companies that maintain personal and financial information to notify consumers in writing, or by email or phone in the event of a breach. In general, notification is required to contact consumers if the information breached is your first name or first initial and last name in combination with 1) a social security number, credit or debit card number, or driver's license, or 2) an account number, credit card number or debit card number in combination with any required security code, access code, or password that would permit access to an individual financial account.

Deliberate breaches pose the greatest potential for harm to businesses and consumers; accidental data breaches are less likely to be harmful than those resulting from an intentional computer hack or hardware theft. Unfortunately, these attacks are on the rise. Earlier this year, PlayStation game maker Sony Corp. was attacked by hackers and the intruders may have gained information on 101.6 million users of Sony's online services for games, music and films.

Given the number of data breaches, consumers may receive notices from multiple companies. Many choose to ignore the notices or fail to take advantage of identity theft protection services.

In a survey of more than 2500 victims who used ITAC this year, nearly 70% did not know the source of the crime. “Given the pervasive threat of identity theft from multiple sources, it make sense to take these notices seriously and to accept help when it’s offered,” said Wallace.

About ITAC

ITAC, the Identity Theft Assistance Center (www.identitytheftassistance.org), is the national advocate for identity theft victims and a leading voice on identity policy. Millions of consumers have access to the ITAC victim assistance service through our members – the financial services companies who support ITAC and offer it as a free service for their customers. ITAC is dedicated to protecting all consumers through education, research and the criminal prosecution of identity crime. Through our partnership with Intersections Inc., ITAC’s world-class victim assistance and identity management service is available to everyone through ITAC Sentinel® (www.itacsentinel.com).

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