

Identity Theft is the fastest-growing crime in America. Today, thieves from around the world are eager to learn your sensitive personal and financial information, and quite often their approach to you may seem perfectly legitimate. It's not. Here are a few things to remember:

No one from Southern Independent Bank will be calling you asking for account numbers, your social security number or any other pertinent personal information, unless we are responding to a specific request from you. We already have that information.

Identity Theft can take place by telephone, e-mail or even people rustling through your garbage, hoping to find account statements that bear your account numbers, not only at the bank but from other stores or service providers. Never provide account numbers or personal information to anyone by phone unless you initiated the call and are confident you are dealing with a reputable company. The same thing goes for providing personal or financial information online.

Be sure to shred all documents bearing personal or financial information and account numbers before disposing of them in the trash.

Many ID thieves will resort to having you refer to a website that looks perfectly legitimate, with logos they have scanned. Always beware! Do not be intimidated by ID thieves who approach you as being a government representative. Government agencies do not act in that manner.

Recent activity in our area in Identity Theft involve one or more of the incidents described above. If you have any question whatsoever about the legitimacy of any request for information, do not provide such information but, instead, request a return phone number and check it out by contacting the main office of a store, or call the bank if someone is representing a bank official.

Being alert means being safe.