Fighting Consumer Fraud & Identity Theft in Virginia

September 25, 2018

TO HEAR THE WEBINAR CALL 1-800-260-0702
Access Code: 453892
Welcome!

Presenters:

- Jon Miller Steiger, FTC East Central Regional Office
- Richard S. Schweiker, Jr. Virginia Office of the Attorney General
- Kaitlin G. Cooke, United States Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of Virginia
- James W. (Jay) Speer, Virginia Poverty Law Center
- Vee Johnson, Fairfax County Consumer Affairs Branch
- Debbie Feierman, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
- Patti Poss & Drew Johnson, FTC
Overview

• The Virginia landscape
• The latest scams
• Identity theft
• Working together to fight fraud and identity theft

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Fraud & Identity Theft Reports in Virginia for 2017
# Virginia Top Reports - 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Complaints</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Complaints</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Debt Collection</td>
<td>11,539</td>
<td>6. Credit Bureaus, Information Furnishers and Report Users</td>
<td>2,570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Imposter Scams</td>
<td>9,677</td>
<td>7. Telephone and Mobile Services</td>
<td>2,549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Banks and Lenders</td>
<td>4,339</td>
<td>8. Auto-Related Complaints</td>
<td>2,518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Shop-at-Home and Catalog Sales</td>
<td>2,949</td>
<td>9. Credit Cards</td>
<td>1,421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Prizes, Sweepstakes and Lotteries</td>
<td>2,723</td>
<td>10. Mobile: Accessories, Devices, and Services</td>
<td>1,267</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Younger people reported losing money to fraud more often than older people.

But when people aged 70+ had a loss, the median loss was much higher.
For Consumers Who Have Been Scammed:

• Contact the payment provider
  • Tell them the transaction was fraudulent
  • Ask for the money back

• Report the fraud to law enforcement:
  • FTC.gov/complaint or FTC.gov/queja
THE LATEST SCAMS
The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is the government agency that collects federal taxes.

Scammers pretend to be IRS officials to get you to send them money.

You owe us taxes
IRS Imposters

Tips for Consumers:

• Never send money to anyone who asks
• Requests to wire money or send prepaid cards or gift cards are always scams
• The IRS will never threaten to arrest or deport

www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0519-irs-imposter-scams-infographic
IRS Imposters: Twists

- Private debt collection for old IRS debts
- Get a letter first with name of debt collector & authentication number
- *Always pay the IRS directly*
- Scammers make IRS deposits, then demand the money
- *Follow the IRS’s instructions to return money*
  [www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2018/03/watch-out-these-new-tax-scams](http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2018/03/watch-out-these-new-tax-scams)
It often starts with a pop-up . . .

- Shows up within your internet browser
- Might imitate a blue error screen or trusted antivirus software

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CALL</th>
<th>NOW</th>
<th>OR ELSE...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wants you to call a toll-free number</td>
<td>Urges you to call immediately</td>
<td>Threatens that you may lose personal data if you don’t call</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tech Support Scams

Tips for Consumers:

• Hang up on callers who say you have a computer problem
• Ignore pop-ups that say to call tech support
• Never share passwords or give remote access
• Questions? Call the legitimate company before you do anything

www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0346-tech-support-scams
Sweepstakes & Grant Scams
Sweepstakes Scams

• Never pay to collect a so-called prize or grant
• Legit sweepstakes don’t make you pay a fee
• [website link]

Grant Scams

• No surprise government grants
• No charge for a government grant or for a list of government grants-making agencies
• Grants.gov – one place to apply
• [website link]
Family Emergency Scams
Family Emergency Scams

Tips for Consumers:

• SLOW DOWN
• Get off the phone and check with a family member or friend. (Even if they say it’s a secret)
• Do not wire money or buy a prepaid card or a gift card and give someone the card’s numbers
• [Website link](http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0204-family-emergency-scams)
Fake Check Scams

FAKE CHECK SCAMS
Did someone send you a check and ask you to send some money back?

THAT’S A SCAM.

Fake Check Scams

IF IT’S A FAKE CHECK, WHY IS MONEY IN YOUR ACCOUNT?

WHAT TO DO:

Be wary. Talk to someone you trust and contact your bank before you act.

Never take a check for more than your selling price.

Selling online? Consider using an escrow or online payment service.

Never send money back to someone who sent you a check.

Spot this scam? Tell the Federal Trade Commission: ftc.gov/complaint
Charity Scams

Operation
Donate with Honor

Which veterans group would you donate to?
- American Disabled Veterans Foundation
- National Vietnam Veterans Foundation
- Healing American Heroes, Inc.
- Veterans Fighting Breast Cancer
- Military Families of America
- VietNow National Headquarters, Inc.
- Foundation for American Veterans, Inc.
- Healing Heroes Network
- Help the Vets, Inc.

They have all been sued for lying to donors.
Don’t depend on the name.
Do your research.
Then donate.
Charity Scams

Other tips at:
www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0074-giving-charity
Unwanted Calls

• Telemarketing robocalls are more than just annoying: they are illegal

• The FTC has sued operations selling:
  – medical alert and home security systems
  – interest rate reduction services
  – auto warranties
  – free vacations
Unwanted Calls

• Report them:
  – DoNotCall.gov or 1-888-382-1222

• FTC shares information about reported unwanted calls with phone companies
  – Helps them block numbers

• Don’t trust caller ID: easy to spoof

• Just hang up! It’s ok to be rude

• Call-blocking technology
  – www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0548-blocking-unwanted-calls
How to Stop Unwanted Calls

www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/how-stop-unwanted-calls

How to stop unwanted calls
ON A MOBILE PHONE

See what built-in features your phone has.

Download a call-blocking app.
- Some apps are free, but others charge a monthly fee.
- Some apps will access your contacts.
- Calls might be stopped, ring silently, or go straight to voicemail.

See what services your carrier offers.

Report unwanted calls at ftc.gov/complaint

How to stop unwanted calls
ON A LANDLINE

See what services your carrier offers.

Install a call-blocking device.
Some use blocklists to
- stop unwanted calls
- divert calls to voicemail
Some use whitelists of approved numbers.

Some services are free, but others charge a monthly fee.

Report unwanted calls at ftc.gov/complaint
Debt Collection and Debt Scams

- **Fake Debt Collection Scams**
  [www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0258-fake-debt-collectors](www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0258-fake-debt-collectors)

- **Mortgage Relief & Foreclosure Rescue Scams**
  [www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0100-mortgage-relief-scams](www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0100-mortgage-relief-scams)
  [www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0193-facing-foreclosure](www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0193-facing-foreclosure)

- **Student Loan Debt Scams**
  [www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/1028-student-loans](www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/1028-student-loans)
Opportunity Scams

- Investments
- Job scams
- Business opportunities
Small Business Scams

• Unordered supplies
• Business directory listings
• Domain name/website registrations
• Payment processing
• Charity scams

www.FTC.gov/SmallBusiness
Someone uses your personal information to

- Open accounts
- File taxes
- Buy things
Examples of Misuse

• Open Credit Cards
• Open Utility Accounts
• Apply for a Tax Refund
• Get a Loan
• Apply for Employment
• Get Medical Care

Impact on Victims

• Denial of credit/loans
• Denial of public benefits
• Denial of medical care
• Denial/loss of employment
• Harassment by debt collectors
• Legal issues/arrest
• Stress/anxiety
• Recovery time/expense
Reduce the Risk

• Review your mail, especially financial statements
• Check your credit report every year:
  – Free report from AnnualCreditReport.com
• Protect your Social Security and Medicare numbers
• Store documents securely and shred before discarding
• File your taxes as early as you can
Equifax Data Breach

• Check if you’re affected: equifaxsecurity2017.com
• What can you do?
  – Monitor your accounts
  – Fraud alert or credit freeze
  – File taxes early
• Visit ftc.gov/equifax
New Law, New Credit Rights

• FRAUD ALERTS now last one year rather than 90 days

• CREDIT FREEZES are free for all
  – Also for kids under age 16
  – Also for incapacitated adults

• FREE CREDIT MONITORING for active duty military starting May 24, 2019

• For more information, go to ftc.gov/newcreditlaw
Report identity theft and get a recovery plan

Get Started ➔

or browse recovery steps

IdentityTheft.gov can help you report and recover from identity theft.

HERE’S HOW IT WORKS:

Tell us what happened.
We’ll ask some questions about your situation. Tell us as much as you can.

Get a recovery plan.
We’ll use that info to create a personal recovery plan.

Put your plan into action.
If you create an account, we’ll walk you through each recovery step, update your plan as needed, track your progress, and pre-fill forms and letters for you.

Get started now. Or you can browse a complete list of possible recovery steps.
New Medicare Cards
Starting In April 2018
New Medicare Cards – Stay Connected

• Find more technical information, detailed updates, training opportunities, and materials to share on the web:
  • CMS.gov/newcard

• Comments and questions are always welcome! Send to: NewMedicareCardSSNRemoval@cms.hhs.gov

• Information for people with Medicare:
  • Medicare.gov/newcard
Report Fraud to the FTC

FTC.gov/complaint or FTC.gov/queja
1-877-FTC-HELP
Virginia Office of the Attorney General
Consumer Protection Section

• Enforce state and federal antitrust and consumer protection laws
• Serve as central clearinghouse for consumer complaints
• Offer dispute resolution services for consumer complaints
• Operate a consumer hotline
Virginia Office of the Attorney General
Consumer Protection Section
Counseling, Intake and Referral Unit

• Statewide clearinghouse for consumer complaints
  • 3,932 written complaints in 2017
  • 24,135 calls in 2017

• Consumer Hotline: 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
  1-800-552-9963
  804-786-2042

• Website: www.ag.virginia.gov
• Address: 202 North 9th Street
  Richmond, VA  23219
• Fax: 804-225-4378
Virginia Office of the Attorney General
Consumer Protection Section
Dispute Resolution Unit

• Offer Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) services for complaints that do not allege a violation of law
  – Contact consumer and business and attempt to facilitate resolution of the complaint

• Some complaints are assigned to Investigators

• Resolved/closed 3,213 complaints in 2017

• Consumers recovered $944,106 in 2017
Recoveries Since January 2014

- Restitution – $42.5 million
- Collection Forbearance – $168.7 million
- Civil Penalties/Attorneys’ Fees – $35.1 million
Virginia Office of the Attorney General
Consumer Protection Section Webpage
www.ag.virginia.gov/consumer-protection
Virginia Office of the Attorney General
Identity Theft Passport & Affidavit

• **Identity Theft Passport** – Card you can carry and present to law enforcement or other individuals who may challenge you about your identity if you are the victim of an identity crime
  – To protect victims from unlawful detention or arrest for crimes committed by someone else under a stolen identity

• **Identity Theft Affidavit** – Instead of completing several different forms, you can use the Identity Theft Affidavit to alert businesses about the fraud
Identity Theft Passport is available to any Virginians who:

- Filed a police report because they believe they are a victim of identity crime; and/or
- Obtained a court order expunging their record as a result of an identity crime

Apply to the Virginia Attorney General’s Office

- Information and forms available online: www.oag.state.va.us/programs-initiatives/identity-theft
U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of Virginia

Department of Justice Elder Justice Initiative
https://www.justice.gov/elderjustice

Virginia Elder Justice Coordinators

Eastern District of Virginia
Kaitlin G. Cooke
919 E. Main Street, Suite 1900
Richmond, VA 23219
804-819-5416

Western District of Virginia
Ronald M. Huber
255 W. Main Street, Suite 130
Charlottesville, VA 22902
434-293-4283
U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of Virginia

Law Enforcement Contacts
Federal Bureau of Investigation – 804-261-1044
Secret Service – 804-592-3086
https://www.secretservice.gov
United States Postal Inspection Service – 877-876-2455
https://postalinspectors.uspis.gov/contactUS/filecomplaint.aspx

Informational Resources
Consumer Financial Protection Bureau– https://www.consumerfinance.gov/practitioner-resources/resources-for-older-adults/
National Clearing House on Abuse in Later Life – http://www.ncall.us
National Center on Elder Abuse – https://ncea.acl.gov/
Administration for Community Living – https://www.acl.gov
Virginia Poverty Law Center
Senior Legal Helpline

• 844-802-5910
• Legal assistance and advice for Virginians aged 60 and over
• Topics covered include: Financial exploitation and some consumer issues
• Also covered: Long term care, Medicaid, guardianship and alternatives
Virginia Poverty Law Center
Predatory Loan Help Hotline

• 866-830-4501
• Call us if you are stuck in a car title loan, payday loan or an internet loan
Virginia Poverty Law Center
Internet Loans

- Promises of fast cash from internet loans often leads to…
- Sale of your personal information which leads to…
- False threats of criminal prosecution
- Harassment calls to family and friends
- Endless scam calls and emails
Virginia Poverty Law Center
VaLegalAid.org

- information about civil legal issues
- Choose a topic to get answers to your legal questions, find a legal aid office near you, court information, public forms and more
- Information on fraud, identity theft and unfair sales and practices
- Call 866-LEGLAID (866-534-5243) to reach your local legal aid office
Fairfax County Consumer Affairs Branch

- Provides information and resources about identity theft, fraud, and scams
- Consumer Specialist available Monday - Friday between 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. to answer questions or call to schedule a community presentation
- Call 703-222-8435; TTY 711
- Email consumer@fairfaxcounty.gov
- Resources available at:
  - fairfaxcounty.gov/cableconsumer/csd/identity-theft-resources
HOW CAN WE WORK TOGETHER TO FIGHT FRAUD AND IDENTITY THEFT?
Keep up with the latest scams and share with your community

- Sign up for scam alerts at [FTC.gov/scams](https://FTC.gov/scams)
- Share these alerts on your website, in your newsletter or emails, or on social media
Keep up with the latest scams and share with your community

• Follow us on social media and share:
  – @FTC
  – @laFTC
  – @MilConsumer
  – Facebook.com/FederalTradeCommission
  – Facebook.com/MilitaryConsumer
Use and Share Free FTC Resources

• **Consumer.FTC.gov**: hundreds of fraud articles

• **Consumer.gov**: consumer protection basics, plain and simple

• **FTC.gov/PassItOn**: helping older adults protect others from fraud

• **YouTube.com/FTCVideos**: view and share videos
Use and Share Free FTC Resources

Bulkorder.FTC.gov

10 things you can do to AVOID FRAUD

Identity Theft
What to know, What to do
Talk to Us

• Help for Virginia’s Congressional delegation
  – Derick Rill, FTC’s Office of Congressional Relations
drill@ftc.gov or 202-326-3007

• Consumer Sentinel Network
  www.ftc.gov/enforcement/consumer-sentinel-network
  – Law enforcement groups can obtain access to complaints by contacting Nick Mastrocinque at
  nmastrocinque@ftc.gov
Thank you for joining us!

Speakers:

- **Jon Miller Steiger**, FTC East Central Regional Office
- **Richard S. Schweiker, Jr.**, Virginia Office of the Attorney General
- **Kaitlin G. Cooke**, United States Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of Virginia
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- **Vee Johnson**, Fairfax County Consumer Affairs Branch
- **Debbie Feierman**, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
- **Patti Poss & Drew Johnson**, FTC
Thank you for joining us!

Slides available at: Consumer.gov/StateWebinars

*Please spread the word to fight fraud and identity theft throughout Virginia!*

Feedback about the webinar:

everycommunity@ftc.gov