

“We all are aware of the fact that identity theft exists,” Captain William Greene of the Boone Police Department said.

In fact, with the recent arrest of the operator of a local cleaning service, the issue has new relevance here in the High Country. “It’s impossible to prevent entirely,” he warned, but there are steps citizens can take to reduce their risk of identity theft.

1. Review your credit reports.
2. Know to whom you’re giving your personal information to- and what for.
3. Minimize the personal information you carry with you- do not carry your social security card or extra credit cards.
4. Do not place outgoing mail in your residential mailbox. Go to a secured box or the post office.
5. Have a locked mail box for incoming mail.
6. Never just throw away financial documents or pre-approved credit card offers- shred them.
7. Never write down your Personal Identification Number (PIN) or passwords.
8. Pay attention to your billing cycles. Follow up if a bill does not arrive. Be aware of charges on bank statements and report those you cannot account for.
9. Never leave personal information in your automobile.

If you suspect you have been the victim of identity theft- do not hesitate to call law enforcement immediately.