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From: Joe Mierendorf, Sue Cobb, and Mark Reed

RE: **What to do when you become a victim of identity theft**

If you have been the victim of identity theft, here are the steps to report the incident and protect your assets.

1. **File a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC).** You can locate the complaint form at www.consumer.gov/idtheft, or call the FTC's hotline at 1-877-438-4338. You will also find two different cover letters for your local police department. One letter covers fraud on your existing accounts, and the other covers fraud on new accounts that may be established in your name.
2. **File an identity theft report with your local police department.** Ask them to file the FTC form, the cover letters, and all supporting documents with their report so that you can dispute fraudulent activity on your accounts.
3. **Initiate a fraud alert.** You should contact one of three credit agencies to begin this process. Whichever agency you contact is responsible for notifying the other two agencies regarding the fraud alert. The fraud alert will tell potential issuers of credit in your name that there has been fraudulent activity, and that you do not authorize the establishment of any new credit accounts. The three agencies are:
Equifax: www.equifax.com, or 1-800-525-6285
Experian: www.experian.com, or 1-888-397-3742
TransUnion: www.transunion.com, or 1-800-680-7289

Please be aware that the fraud alert will not protect you from all accounts being established without your consent. Store credit cards, internet businesses, or utilities that don't check with one of the three credit agencies may extend credit using your name.

4. **Check your credit reports for suspicious activity for a year or so.** Review the reports for inaccurate information, and especially for inquiries from companies that you did not personally contact, accounts you did not open, and debts you don't know about. Notify the credit agency of any errors.
5. **Close any suspicious or tampered accounts immediately,** and ask for fraud dispute forms from all companies where you have identified fraudulent charges or where identity thieves have opened new accounts in your name. Once you have settled disputed accounts, request a letter stating that the company has closed the disputed account.

Identity thieves are finding new ways every day to access your personal information. Please contact us if you have any questions about defending yourself against identity theft.

*Other memos include:

Cash Flow Issues
Job Cost Identification
QuickBooks® and Peachtree® Training
Buying and Selling Real Estate
Safeguarding your Cash

Exit Strategies
Business Valuation
Detecting Fraud
Retention Schedules
Trying Times