



MHEFCU-Newsletter

July 1, 2005

Methodist Hospital Employees
Federal Credit Union

*"Make your life
easier with
FREE Online
Banking."*

FREE

E-Statements
build a history
so you can
easily go back
and re-print a
statement if
needed

Defending Yourself Against Identity Theft

Identity theft is one of the fastest growing crimes in the United States. Identity thieves steal personal information - like credit card account numbers, Social Security numbers, names and telephone numbers - to commit fraud. By stealing your personal information, an impostor could buy a car by taking out an auto loan in your name, charge items on your credit card, counterfeit checks or set up phone service using your name, all without you knowing about it.

TIP! Preventing or Recovering from ID THEFT

How can I prevent identity theft from happening to me?

- Promptly remove mail from your mailbox.
- Carry only essential credit cards and identification.
- Report all lost or stolen credit cards or checks immediately.
- Check all statements carefully to ensure you have authorized all charges.
- Maintain a list of the credit cards you use and cancel the ones you do not use.
- Don't carry your Social Security card or birth certificate-leave them in a secure place.
- Store all personal information in a safe place and shred old credit card receipts, old account statements and unused credit card offers before discarding.
- Write down or photocopy the front and back of all credit cards and keep in a secure location. Do the same for all bank and investment accounts.
- Don't give out personal information over the phone, through the mail or over the Internet unless you've initiated the contact or are sure you know whom you're dealing with.

If you think your identity has been stolen, here's what to do now:

- Notify the police and file a complaint.
- Contact the fraud departments of any one of the three major credit bureaus to place a fraud alert on your credit file.

[Equifax](#)

Order a report: (800) 685-1111

Report fraud: call (800) 525-6285 and write to: P.O. Box 740256, Atlanta, GA 30374

[Experian](#)

Order a report: (888) 397-3742

Report fraud: call (888) 397-3742 and write to: P.O. Box 9532, Allen, TX 75013

[TransUnion](#)

Order a report: (800) 888-4213

Report fraud: call (800) 680-7289 and write: P.O. Box 6790, Fullerton, CA 92834

- Alert us and any other financial institutions you do business with to flag your accounts and to inform you of any unusual activity.
- Contact your creditors to inform them of the problem.

Beware of Phishing. Phishing is scam where e-mails are sent falsely claiming to be a legitimate company, in an attempt to obtain non-public personal information for identity theft. Once again, don't give out personal information over the phone, through the mail or over the Internet unless you've initiated the contact or are sure you know whom you're dealing with.

Additional Resources:

[Federal Trade Commission \(FTC\)](#) or 1-877-IDTHEFT

Download the resource guide: *ID Theft: When Bad Things Happen To Your Good Name*

Download an ID Theft Affidavit

[Identity Theft Resource Center](#)

Other authorities you might want to contact in case of fraud:

[U.S. Postal Service](#)

[U.S. Social Security Administration](#)

This can help prevent ID Theft: Sign Up for Direct Deposit Today!

The number of members using direct deposit is skyrocketing. Don't be left behind! Direct deposit is the safe and secure way to guarantee your payroll is credited to your account on time. Direct deposit works when you are on vacation, when you are out sick from work and when you don't have time to get to the credit union. All your payroll department needs is our routing number (311079898) and your checking or savings account number (123456100).

How do overdrafts and bounced checks happen?

When you write a check, withdraw money from an ATM, use your debit card to make a purchase, or make an automatic bill payment or other electronic payment for more than the amount in your checking account, you overdraw your account. You will be charged an "NSF" fee and the person or company that you wrote the check to--for example, a store, your landlord, or the phone company--may charge you a "returned-check" fee *in addition to* the fee your bank or credit union charges you.

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How can you avoid overdraft and bounced-check fees?

The best way to avoid overdraft and bounced-check fees is to manage your account so you don't overdraw it.

- **Keep track of how much money you have in your checking account by keeping your account register up-to-date.** Record all checks when you write them and other transactions when you make them. And don't forget to subtract any fees.
- **Pay special attention to your electronic transactions.** Record your ATM withdrawals and fees, debit card purchases, and online payments.
- **Don't forget about automatic bill payments you may have set up for utilities, insurance, or loan payments.**
- **Keep an eye on your account balance.** Remember that some checks and automatic payments may not have cleared yet.
- **Review your account statements each month.** Between statements, you can find out which payments have cleared and check your balance by checking online or at an ATM. Be sure to find out the actual amount in your account.

Sometimes mistakes happen. If you do overdraw your account, deposit money into the account as soon as possible to cover the overdraft amount plus any fees and daily charges from your bank. Depositing money into your account can help you avoid additional overdrafts and fees.

What is a Credit Union?

A Credit Union, like a bank, is a financial institution that may offer deposit accounts, loans, and investment accounts. The primary difference between a credit union and a bank is that a credit union is "not for profit", thus a credit union can, in most cases, offer its members services at a lower cost and provide better rates. A credit union is chartered by the NCUA to do business with members only as defined in the charter. MHEFCU is chartered to have members from Methodist Hospital and many of its affiliates and medical personnel. You must be a member of the credit union for us to assist you.

Are the funds I deposit insured like at a bank?

Yes, just like a bank, individual accounts are insured up to \$100,000 by NCUA. NCUA is like the FDIC as it is a federally regulated insurance fund. The primary difference is, unlike the FDIC, NCUA has not used tax payer dollars to bail out failed credit unions.

This is another way to deter ID Theft and make it easy to monitor your accounts:

MyBranch CU Online Banking?

MHEFCU has a website and FREE Online Banking.

Our new easy to remember address: www.mhcu.net

The new online banking website offers powerful, secure online access to your accounts.

There's so much you can do....

- Obtain the history of your accounts and download the information.
- Transfer funds between accounts
- Pay virtually any bill in just minutes with **MyBills**.
- Schedule fixed and variable payment dates with **MyBills**
- Eliminate need for checks, stamps, or trips to the mailbox with **MyBills**.
- Apply for a loan
- **Free E-statements** (No worrying about identity theft from your mailbox)
- Get current rates on Savings, CD's and Loans

So much you can do and it's safe and secure.

Visit our website at: www.mhcu.net

Be sure and add it to your favorites list. You will want to visit our website often.

MyBills is a way you can pay all your bills quick, easy and securely. This feature has been added to help our members that want to use this easy method of paying bills. **The first two months are free; thereafter the monthly fee is \$5.95. Add up your bills and see how much you spend on stamps. This service could end up saving you money.**

If you have any questions about our services please call us at 214-947-1365. We are here to help you.