

MVFG ADVISOR

M A R T H A ' S V I N E Y A R D F I N A N C I A L G R O U P

W W W . M V B A N K . C O M

Greetings! Our article this month is entitled "How You Can Safeguard Your Identity". One thing you can be sure of is that Martha's Vineyard Savings Bank and the Martha's Vineyard Financial Group take great care in safeguarding your account information. We never share your information without first obtaining your permission. Just a reminder - Daylight Savings Time begins Sunday, March 13th and the official start of Spring just 20 days away! Stop by and visit us at the new Financial Group Building located at 496 State Road in West Tisbury.

Since 1991 Martha's Vineyard Financial Group has been helping individuals protect and preserve their assets by offering sound investment advice and estate planning guidance. With decades of experience the Martha's Vineyard Financial Group has a proven track record of providing effective estate planning strategies. As the largest money manager on Martha's Vineyard we stand ready to assist you with protecting your assets and planning for your retirement. When you entrust your family and financial assets to us we never forget that we are in business to serve you and take that charge very seriously. Our team of experienced professionals is always available to meet with you to review your account and to discuss how our products and services can help you meet your objectives.

If you are an existing client - thank you for your business. If not, we welcome the opportunity to speak with you about our many investment products and services.

Bob Ripley, Executive Vice President



**Martha's
Vineyard**
FINANCIAL GROUP

For more information on our investment services or to schedule a confidential visit, please contact the Financial Group at 508-693-8850.

MARTHA'S VINEYARD FINANCIAL GROUP - SINCE 1991

How You Can Safeguard Your Identity

The best strategy for dealing with identity theft is **prevention**. Here are some very important prevention tips.

- Place **strong passwords** on your credit card accounts, bank accounts and phone accounts.
- Install **strong computer protection** software on your computer. You want to block not just the viruses that mess up your files, but also those that can hijack information that is stored on your machine and send it elsewhere.
- Nearly 1/3 of all known identity crimes involve a lost or stolen wallet, checkbook, or credit card. **Don't carry PIN codes** or passcodes for your cards with you. Leave your Social Security card at home except when you absolutely need to use it.
- **Don't leave your checkbook, credit cards, or financial papers lying around** where they could end up in the wrong hands. Many ID theft victims are familiar with the person who ends up stealing their personal information.
- **Shred** personal papers that you are throwing away, including ATM receipts, credit receipts, credit statements, credit cards, bank statements, completed insurance forms, physicians' statements, expired charge cards, cancelled checks, credit card "convenience checks" and new credit offers you get in the mail.
- **Never give your personal information** (such as social security number, credit card number, bank account number) over the phone, in the mail, or on the Internet unless you're the one initiating the contact and it's with a company you know. Stick with this important advice, even if they say you've won a grant or a prize, or they tell you they're calling from your bank or a government agency.
- **Watch for signs of identity theft**, like:
 - failing to receive your regular bills or other mail. Follow up with creditors if your bills don't arrive on time. A missing bill could mean an identity thief has taken over your account and changed your billing address to cover his tracks.
 - receiving credit cards that you didn't apply for.
 - being denied credit, or being offered less favorable credit terms, like a high interest rate, for no apparent reason.
 - getting calls or letters from debt collectors or businesses about merchandise or services you didn't buy. Always follow up with the business to find out if this is an honest error or signs of a problem.
- Roadside mailboxes are favorite targets of ID thieves looking for checks to steal. **Don't let incoming or outgoing mail sit in your mailbox** all day. It's safer to send your outgoing correspondence from the post office or official US mailbox, rather than leaving it in your mailbox with the flag up.
- **Opt out of offers for new credit cards**, mortgages, or other loans. Call the credit bureaus' dedicated line at 1-888-567-8688 from your home telephone. If you call, the automated voice-response system is going to ask for your name, telephone number, and Social Security number; it's ok in this case to provide the information because the credit bureaus already have it as part of your credit history. You can opt out of credit offers for five years or more.
- **Review a copy of your credit report** at least once each year. You can get one free credit history every year from each of the three major bureaus (Experian, Equifax, and TransUnion). By rotating your requests, you can receive a report every four months. Call 1-877-322-8228. All the other sites you hear about in ads may charge you for your report, or sell you something you don't really need or want.
- Notify the credit bureau in writing of any questionable entries and follow through until they are explained or removed. **Don't respond to unsolicited offers to get you copies of your credit report**. If it's a scam, you'll be giving someone everything needed to steal your identity.

As always, we are happy to assist you. Please call us at 508-693-8850.