THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

# REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

DATE ISSUED: October 27, 2011 REPORT NO. 11-147

ATTENTION: Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee
Agenda of November 2, 2011

SUBJECT: Informational Report from the San Diego Police Department
Regarding Identify Theft Awareness

## SUMMARY

THIS IS AN INFORMATION ITEM ONLY. NO ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE COMMITTEE OR THE CITY COUNCIL.

## BACKGROUND

Identity Theft is a crime in which an impostor obtains key pieces of personal identifying information such as Social Security numbers and driver's license numbers and uses them for their own personal gain. This is called ID Theft. It can start with lost or stolen wallets, pilfered mail, a data breach, computer virus, phishing, a scam, or paper documents thrown out by you or a business (dumpster diving). This crime varies widely, and can include check fraud, credit card fraud, financial identity theft, criminal identity theft, governmental identity theft, and medical identity theft.

The San Diego Police Department's Identity Theft Unit was established in 1994. The goal of the Identity Theft Unit is to investigate criminal matters involving cases where victims' personal information has been stolen and used to commit a crime with a fiduciary nexus. At the completion of the investigation we provide the results to the appropriate prosecutorial agency. The Identity Theft unit also assists all area stations and other investigative units in problem solving efforts where financial crimes are a part of the problem, and actively seek community partnerships when starting problem solving projects as necessary within the City of San Diego. The Identity Theft unit provides assistance to citizens and businesses by referring them to appropriate investigative agencies where they can obtain assistance in dealing with problems not handled by the unit and also provides information to and training for residents of San Diego.

**Staffing: Identity Theft Unit**

| Law Enforcement Agency | Position | Total Number of Headcount |
|---|---|---|
| San Diego Police Department | Police Sergeant | 1 |
| | Police Detectives | 6 |
| | Word Processing Operator | 1 |

MOST COMMONLY USED SECTIONS

A. IDENTITY THEFT

1. **530.5 PC, Identity Theft (Felony)** (Unauthorized Use of Personal Identifying Information)

    a. Every person who willfully obtains personal identifying information of another person, and,
    b. Uses that information for any unlawful purpose.

"Personal Identifying Information" as used in this section means the name, address, telephone number, health insurance identification number, taxpayer identification number, school identification number, state or federal driver's license number or identification number, social security number, place of employment, employee identification number, mother's maiden name, demand deposit account number, savings account number, checking account number, PIN or password, alien registration number, government passport number, date of birth, unique biometric data including fingerprint, facial scan identifiers, voice print, retina or iris image, or other unique physical representation, unique electronic data including identification number, address, or routing code, telecommunication identifying information or access device, information contained in a birth or death certificate, or credit card number of an individual person.

INVESTIGATIONS

The San Diego Police Department Identity Theft Unit receives over 3000 complaints a year from individuals and businesses who believe their identity has been stolen and used for financial gain. Although not all cases are investigated, every case is reviewed by the police supervisor where its disposition is determined.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

The Economic Crime Unit actively seeks out and presents in the community information on the prevention of Identity Theft, Financial Crimes and Embezzlement. We work closely with the business community, citizens and service groups to ensure they are educated and prepared to prevent this type of crime. Identity theft prevention material and information are also provided to individuals who view the Police Department's website.

CONCLUSION

The San Diego Police Department's Identity Theft Unit has been in existence for 17 years. The crime of Identity Theft continues to increase as criminals become more complex and the ability to steal the identity of another person becomes easier in the digital age we are living in. The Identity Theft Unit continues to seek out additional resources, proactively investigate assigned crime cases and partner with both the business community and individuals to successfully prevent and prosecute this crime.

Respectfully submitted,

William M. Lansdowne
Chief of Police