

Theodore R. Kulongoski
Governor



NEWS RELEASE

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Governor announces new tools to help Oregonians navigate identity theft law

Consumer Identity Theft Protection Act takes effect Oct. 1

Salem - Governor Kulongoski today unveiled a toolkit to help businesses comply with the new Oregon identity theft law. Several provisions of the law take effect today.

“Identity theft can wreak economic havoc on Oregonians, and it also is extremely costly for the business from where the information was stolen,” the Governor said. “This new law requires businesses to take strong measures to protect personal information, and it gives consumers more ways to guard themselves from being a victim.”

The Oregon Consumer Identity Theft Protection Act, introduced by the Governor and Senator Floyd Prozanski, was passed unanimously by the 2007 Legislature. The new law requires businesses to shield Social Security numbers and notify consumers in the event of a security breach, effective today. The law requires businesses to develop methods to safeguard personal information by Jan. 1, 2008. The act also gives Oregon consumers, effective today, the right to place a “freeze” on their credit file to help prevent identity theft. The new law was supported by a broad coalition of business and consumer representatives.

“Partnering with businesses and many other organizations was essential in developing this bill, and we want to keep that partnership alive as we implement the new law,” the Governor said. “That’s why we developed a toolkit to help businesses understand how to follow the law and help consumers understand their rights in protecting their personal information.”

The toolkit, developed by the Department of Consumer and Business Services, consists of two guides for businesses and a brochure for consumers. The business guides explain each piece of the new law, offer steps businesses can take to comply, and include sample notification letters for businesses to use in the event of a security breach. The consumer brochure explains how to obtain a freeze on your credit and provides other tips for preventing identity theft.

In addition to publishing the guides, the Department of Consumer and Business Services is scheduling presentations around the state to help businesses better understand their rights and responsibilities under the new law.

In 2006, more than 2,800 Oregonians were victims of identity theft, ranking Oregon 13th in the nation per capita, according to the Federal Trade Commission. Identity theft victims may incur damaged credit records, unauthorized charges on credit cards, and unauthorized withdrawals from bank accounts.

To schedule a presentation or request a copy of the educational materials, contact the Department of Consumer and Business Services' Division of Finance and Corporate Securities at 503-378-4140, or toll-free at 866-814-9710. You also can access the materials and a copy of the bill by going to www.dfcs.oregon.gov/id_theft.html.