

Annapolis Police Department



GENERAL ORDER

Number: L.10

**Issue Date: August
2007**

TO: All Personnel

SUBJECT: Identity Theft

PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to provide the member with guidelines for accepting, recording and investigating the crime of identity theft.

POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Annapolis Police Department to investigate identity theft crimes and assist the victim in contacting other relevant investigative and consumer protection agencies.

DEFINITIONS

Identity theft - Is the wrongful use of another person's identifying information such as credit card, social security or driver's license numbers in order to commit financial or other crimes. This information can be used to obtain merchandise and services in the name of the victim or to provide the thief with false credentials. In addition to incurring debt, an imposter might provide false identification to the police, creating a criminal record or leaving outstanding arrest warrants for the person whose identity has been stolen.

I. Required Action

- A. In instances where the victim lives in or out of the City of Annapolis and the crime occurred or believed to have occurred in the City of Annapolis, the responding officer shall:
 1. Take the report and put it on the Annapolis Police Department's "Incident Report" form and classify it as "Identity Theft". There is no specialized report forms for this type of incident.

2. The report should contain a clear narrative (refer to **General Order J.3**) documenting the criminal acts and determine the nature of the fraud or other crime committed in the victim's name.
 3. Determine and document what types of personal identifying information may have been used to commit these crimes i.e., social security number, driver's license number, birth certificate, credit card numbers, etc.
 4. Document any information concerning where the crime took place, the financial institution or related companies involved.
 5. Determine and document if the victim authorized anyone to use his/her name or personal information.
 6. Determine if the victim is willing to assist in the prosecution of suspect(s) identified in the crime.
 7. Determine if the victim has filed a report of the crime with an allied law enforcement agency and whether a case number was provided to the victim.
 8. Collect any documents the complainant has showing the identity theft activity.
- B. In instances where the victim lives in the City of Annapolis, but the crime has occurred outside of the City of Annapolis, i.e, theft of a credit card occurred elsewhere, the officer shall advise the victim to contact the police agency where the criminal incident actually occurred. The officer shall further advise the victim to follow steps 1 through 6 as outlined in section IV A.
- C. **In instances where the victim is not sure where the crime has occurred, the officer will take the report, as this will assist the victim when notifying credit bureaus, credit card companies, banks, etc.** The officer shall further advise the victim to follow steps 1 through 6 as outlined in section IV A.
- D. In order to further assist the victim the officer may give the victim a Identity Theft Victim Assistance Information form.

II. Investigations

- A. As referenced in **General Order L.6** the Platoon supervisor will review the report (identity theft) and determine the solvability of the case. Depending upon solvability, staffing, workload and time constraints, the case may be returned to the patrol officer for a follow-up investigation. If the officer cannot close the investigation, the case will be forwarded to the Criminal Investigations Division.
- B. The officer or assigned detective, if necessary shall contact and coordinate with other involved or potentially involved allied agencies when necessary for collaboration and avoidance of duplication of efforts. These agencies include but are not limited to:

1. Federal law enforcement agencies such as the U.S. Secret Service, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Postal Service and whether or not the victim has filed a report with them
2. Any state and/or local law enforcement agency with which the victim has filed a report.
3. Any task force in which the Department is participating in, i.e, U.S. Secret Service task force or but not limited to private security corporations, i.e., bank security, financial security, etc.

III. Identity Theft File

- A. The Federal Bureau of Investigation has established an Identity Theft File in the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) in which information on the victim is entered.
- B. The officer will explain to the victim that they may have a password (of their choosing) along with some victim identifiers entered into NCIC. The password would be used in the event that a suspect is using the victims identification and the suspect is stopped by the police. The password would be used for future identity verification purposes. That is, when the victims name is checked through NCIC the password is displayed on the NCIC screen. However, the suspect would not know the password when questioned thus, indicating (with other information) that the identification of the suspect may be in question.
- C. If the victim would want to participate in this service, the officer will give the victim the Identity Theft File Consent Document (2 sided) to fill out and sign. By signing the document this gives the Annapolis Police Department permission to enter the victims information into NCIC. Have the victim complete, read and sign the page titled "Identity Theft File Consent Document" then have the victim complete the required section on the reverse side titled "Identity Theft Entry".
- D. The officer will then complete the areas on the form that indicate "to be completed by the officer". The officer will then attach the Identity Theft File Consent Document to the report. Once the report is approved by a supervisor, the report will then be taken to Communications.
- E. The Police Communications Operator will then ensure that the information is correctly completed on the form and then follow the directions on the form before faxing the request to the Maryland State Police.

IV. Assisting Victims/Public Information

- A. Officers taking identity theft reports will take steps to reasonably assist the victim in providing information on the crime of identity theft and provide information/suggestions when appropriate, such as but not limited to:

1. Recommend that the victim call and cancel each credit and charge cards. Have the victim request new cards with new account numbers.
2. Refer the victim to the fraud department of any one of the three major credit bureaus to place a “fraud alert” on their credit file. The “fraud alert” requests creditors to contact the victim before opening any new accounts or making any changes to existing accounts. As soon as one credit bureau confirms the “fraud alert”, the other two credit bureaus will automatically be notified to also activate “fraud alerts”. The victim should also request copies of their credit reports. The contact information is available at the FTC website www.consumer.gov/idtheft.
3. Refer the victim to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) which acts as the nations clearing house for information related to identity theft crimes. The contact information is available at the FTC website www.consumer.gov/idtheft.
4. If bank accounts are involved, recommend that the victim report the loss to each financial institution, cancel existing accounts and open new ones with new account numbers. If necessary, place stop payments on outstanding checks and contact creditors to explain.
5. If a drivers license is involved, recommend that the victim contact the state Motor Vehicle Administration.
6. Recommend that the victim change the locks on their house and car if there is any indication that these may have been copies or otherwise comprised.
7. If a report is taken provide the victim with the case number and information on how to obtain a copy of the police report. The Records Section will provide a copy of the identity theft report free of charge to the victim.

B. Any suggested recommendations of assistance to the victim, or if the victim was given a Identity Theft Victim Assistance Information form will be documented on the Incident Report.

C. The Community Services Section will ensure that information on identity theft is available to the public, through brochures, the City of Annapolis website, etc.

Joseph S. Johnson
Chief of Police

References
1. Accreditation Standards 42.2.8
2. General Orders J.3 Written Reports: Content and Style, L.6 Managing Case Investigations

Revision: This is a new General Order