

PREVENTING IDENTITY THEFT WHILE TRAVELING

When you leave your house to travel this summer, whether overseas or at a local hotel for a “staycation”, there are many things you are thinking about including packing suitcases, pet sitters, or confirming reservations. Yet how many travelers think about protecting their identity? Here are some tips to help make your travel safer.

1. It's always best to use cash or a credit card. If possible, **don't use your debit card as thieves can drain your bank account within minutes.**
2. Take out information inside wallets, pockets and purses that are outdated or not needed for travel.
3. Password protect your smart phone in case it is lost or stolen to prevent someone from finding out personal information stored on your phone such as photos, e-mails, etc.
4. Use only secure WiFi networks that require passwords and turn off the WiFi connection settings to your smart phone. Beware of internet cafes, hotel computers, or other public internet access places where hackers are known to troll.
5. If possible use an ATM located inside a building and store your money in different locations as you travel. Be sure to tear up ATM receipts immediately.
6. Most hotel rooms have a safe so guests can lock up valuables and documents. This is the “safest” place to keep what is important to you, not in your suitcase or under the bed.
7. Don't use your passport for all identification needs. Lock it up and use either your driver's license or an identification card at restaurants and entertainment places.

For more information about these safety and security tips, or to report a fraud or scam, contact the Lee County Sheriff's Office fraud line at 258-3287.