Scam Alert – March 2010
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Safety Tips to Prevent Identity Theft During the Census

As one of my previous alerts stated, a mailing from the US Census Bureau will be sent to you in March 2010 to conduct a count of everyone living in the United States. You are legally obliged to answer their questions. If you do not complete and return the form, a second form will be mailed out to you. If you still fail to respond, the US Census Bureau will send a Census Bureau employee out to knock on your door to obtain that information.

The inquiry will be about every person living at each address. This information will include names, ages, genders, race, ethnic origins, birth dates, marital status, employment status and other relevant data.

What our office would like to make sure of is that you need to be aware that there will be some people out there that have nothing to do with the US Census Bureau that will be attempting to take advantage of the situation to obtain your personal identifying information for their own personal gain.

Identity Theft is when someone steals and uses your personal identifying information without your knowledge to commit fraud or other crimes. Identity theft not only can cost you time and money, but it destroys your credit and will ruin your good name.

The statistics that follow are based on the year 2008 as the 2009 statistics have not been released at this time.

For the year 2008, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) stated that identity theft affected approximately 10 million victims. This is a 22% increase from the year 2007. It appears that stolen purses, wallets and physical documentation accounted for 43% of the methods used to commit identity theft while 11% was by some online method.

According to the FTC, the types of identity theft are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Theft</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Credit card fraud</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities fraud</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank fraud</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loan fraud</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government fraud</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment fraud</td>
<td>12%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

According to the FTC, the types of identity theft are as follows:

Identity Theft is not a matter of if it happens, but more so when it happens.
So how can you tell if the person you’re dealing with face-to-face, on the phone or by mail is in fact with the US Census Bureau?

Here are some guidelines:

- You will NEVER be asked to divulge your social security number or any other confidential, personal information like your bank account and/or credit card numbers.
- You will NEVER be asked for money or told that you owe money.
- The Census Bureau will not collect data by email or through online websites. They will not ask you to click a link or attachment.
- All Census workers will carry official identification, a confidentiality notice and more often than not, a handheld computer.
- No Census worker will ask to come into your home, nor should you ever invite them to do so.

If you feel uneasy about any US Census Bureau documents, phone calls or emails that you may have received and would like to ask more questions, or if you would like to verify the employment of a Census Bureau employee, a local office has been set up here in Pueblo at 421 North Main Street. Their phone number is 546-6354.

To locate a regional Census Bureau office in another location, please visit their website at www.census.gov.

If you feel that you may have become a victim of identity theft due to a census scam, or any other scam, please contact and do the following:

- Make an identity theft report at either the Pueblo Police Department or Pueblo Sheriff’s Department (Selection of agency depends on the location of the crime.)
- **Report the identity theft to the Federal Trade Commission.** Your report helps law enforcement officials across the country in their investigations. 1-877-ID-THEFT (438-4338) or TTY, 1-866-653-4261.
- Contact the following credit reporting agencies to obtain a credit report & to place a fraud alert:
  - Equifax: 1-800-525-6285
  - Experian: 1-888-397-3742
  - TransUnion: 1-800-680-7289
- Be sure that when checking your credit report that you also check your children’s credit report as well. Identity theft of the younger generation is rapidly growing.

**IDENTIFY A SCAM BEFORE A SCAM IDENTIFIES YOU!**