

Keeping It Legal

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PROTECTING YOUR IDENTITY

You have all heard that you can't prevent identity theft, but you can minimize your risk by managing your personal information wisely.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) suggests the following six steps to guard against identity theft:

1. Before revealing personal identifying information, find out how it will be used and if it will be shared with others.
2. Pay attention to your billing cycles. Follow up with creditors if bills do not arrive on time.
3. Give your Social Security number only when absolutely necessary.
4. Minimize the identification information and the number of cards you carry

to what you actually need. If your I.D. or credit cards are lost or stolen, notify the creditors by phone immediately, and call the credit bureaus to ask that a "fraud alert" be placed in your file.

5. Order a copy of your credit report from the three credit reporting agencies every year. Make sure it's accurate and includes only those activities you've authorized.

6. Keep items with personal information in a safe place; tear them up when you don't need them anymore. Make sure charge receipts, copies of credit applications, insurance forms, bank checks and statements, expired charge cards, and credit offers you get in the mail are disposed of appropriately.

If you are currently a victim of identity theft, you should do the following:

First, contact the fraud department of each of the three major credit bureaus (i.e. Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion).

Next, contact the creditors of any accounts that were tampered with or fraudulently opened.

Immediately close any accounts that have been tampered with and open new accounts with new personal identification numbers and passwords.

Finally, file a report with your local police or the police department in the community where the identity theft took place.

For additional information on identity theft, visit the FTC website at www.consumer.gov/idtheft

WELCOME!

Your local JA Office is here to help you with all your legal wants and needs.

To request an appointment, you may call 910-394-2341, send an email to 43AMOG.JA.LegalAssistance.us.af.mil, or visit <https://www.pope.af.mil/Units/Legal-appointment>.

We provide notaries, powers of attorneys, and attorney consultations by appointment.

For after-hours emergencies, call the Command Post (394-9000) to reach a JAG.

TESTIFYING IN CIVILIAN COURT

Military members and Air Force civilians are often called upon to testify or appear at court for various administrative and judicial matters.

When that happens, it is important to know the basics of when and how you are allowed to testify.

If you receive such a demand, contact the Legal Office for advice.

ETHICS CORNER — Gifts

The holidays are fast approaching...That often leads to questions regarding the gifts that may be given and by whom.

In general, you may not give a gift to an official who is in a position superior to yours. Additionally, you may not accept a gift from a lower paid employee, but there are exceptions to the rule!

The most common exception is the special infrequent occasion gift. Some examples of infre-

quent occasions are: marriage, the birth of a child, retirement, and permanent change of station (PCS).

What about a gift from a group of people? A gift from a group containing one or more subordinates is limited to a \$300 value. An individual may not contribute to more than one group. You may not solicit a DoD employee to contribute more than \$10 to a group gift (employees may give more voluntarily). Contractors may not contribute to group gifts.

This paper is for general legal education, and should not be substituted for legal advice