

# How You Can Help Us Protect Your Social Security Number and Keep Your Information Safe



Securing today  
and tomorrow

Social Security maintains a robust cyber-security system, but *you* are the most important factor in helping us keep your information safe.

You can help by:

- **Opening your personal *my Social Security* account.** Create your account today and take away the risk of someone else trying to create one in your name, even if they obtain your Social Security number.
- **Add a second method of identification to your *my Social Security* account.** If you already have a *my Social Security* account, but haven't signed in lately, take a moment to log in to easily take advantage of our second method to identify you each time you log in. This is in addition to our first layer of security, which is a username and password. You can choose to use either your cell phone number or your email address as your second identification method. Using two ways to identify you when you sign in will help protect your account from unauthorized use and potential identity theft. If you suspect identity theft, report it to our Office of the Inspector General and visit [www.identitytheft.gov](http://www.identitytheft.gov).
- **Other ways to protect your information** include not routinely carrying your card or other documents that display your number with you. Also, be careful about sharing your number, even when you're asked for it. You should ask why your number is needed, how it'll be used, and what will happen if you refuse.

## Sign Up for an Optional Extra Level of Protection

You can opt for an extra level of protection for a *my Social Security* account. Individuals seeking this extra security must answer a financial verification question.

- **Sign up for extra security at registration.** When you first register for a *my Social Security* account, you must verify your identity by answering an additional security question. We'll ask for one of the following:
  - the last 8 digits of your Visa, MasterCard or Discover Card; or
  - information found in your W-2 tax form; or
  - information from your 1040 Schedule SE (self-employment) tax form.
- **Signing up for extra security if already have a *my Social Security* account.** After logging in to *my Social Security*, go into the "Security Settings" tab to begin the upgrade process. "Add Extra Security" is the first option in the Security Settings tab. Follow the instructions to add the extra security to your authentication process. Finishing this process usually takes 5 to 10 business days. An upgrade code will be mailed to your home address. The letter will also include step-by-step instructions to finalize the security upgrade.

## Block Electronic Access

If you know your Social Security information has been compromised you can use our Block Electronic Access. You can block any automated telephone and electronic access to your Social Security record. No one, including you, will be able to see or change your personal information on the internet or through our automated telephone service. If you block access to your record and then change your mind in the future, you can contact Social Security and ask us to unblock it after you prove your identity.