



Jeffrey R. Gahler,  
Sheriff

# HARFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE OPERATIONS POLICY

## Identity Theft

<b>Distribution:</b>	<b>All Employees</b>	<b>Policy Number:</b>	<b>OPS 1221</b>		
<b>Responsible Unit:</b>	<b>Criminal Investigations Division</b>	<b>Rescinds:</b>	<b>N/A</b>		
<b>Original Issued Date:</b>	<b>08/19/21</b>	<b>Revision #:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Latest Revision Date:</b>	<b>04/24/24</b>
<b>Latest Required Review was Completed:</b>	<b>04/24/24</b>	<b>Next Review Due:</b>	<b>04/24/27</b>		

### 1. Purpose

To provide Harford County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) personnel with protocols for documenting, investigating, and deterring identity theft crimes.

### 2. Policy

Agency members will take the necessary measures to document criminal complaints of reported identity theft and inform victims on how to contact the appropriate investigative and consumer protection agencies.

### 3. Definition

**IDENTITY THEFT/CRIME:** The fraudulent use of another person's identifying information such as credit card, social security, or driver's license numbers with the intent to facilitate other criminal activities or to obtain credit, goods, or services without the victim's consent. No financial loss is necessary.

### 4. Procedures

A. In instances where the victim resides in Harford County, or any part of the crime occurred in Harford County the initial deputy will:

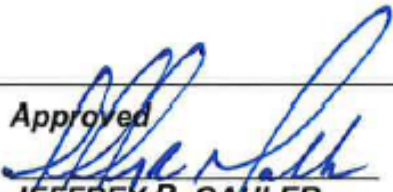
1. Complete an offense report in the Report Management System (RMS) with the appropriate classification and initiate an investigation;
2. Use appropriate reporting classification for identity theft and other fraudulent acts committed against an individual when there is evidence that the following types of unauthorized activities have taken place in the victim's name:
  - a. Credit card, debit card or ATM charges;
  - b. Credit card checks written against victim's account;
  - c. Credit card accounts open or account addresses changed;
  - d. Establishment of a line of credit or loan in victim's name;

- e. Goods or services purchased in victim's name;
  - f. Gaining access to secure areas; and
  - g. Used in computer fraud crimes.
- 3. Document the nature and location of the crime(s) committed in the victim's name in the narrative of the report;
  - 4. Determine 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 with the corporation of issuance);
  - 5. Determine whether the personal identifying information have been lost, stolen, or potentially misappropriated;
  - 6. Determine if the victim authorized anyone to use his/her name or personal information; and
  - 7. Determine if the victim has filed a report of the incident(s) with other law enforcement agencies and whether such agency provided a report or complaint number to the victim.
- B. If the victim does not reside in Harford County and no parts of the crime occurred in Harford County, the deputy may:
- 1. Refer the victim to a law enforcement agency with proper jurisdiction.
- C. Investigative Responsibilities
- 1. Investigations of identity theft will be forwarded to the Criminal Investigations Division/Property Crimes supervisor for review. The investigation will be screened for assignment or screened out and returned to Patrol for investigation.
  - 2. If the case is screened out and sent back to Patrol, the deputy will attempt the following:
    - a. Conduct any follow up inquiries of victims or appropriate witnesses for clarification/expansion of the original incident; and
    - b. Contact other appropriate law enforcement agencies for collaboration and avoidance of duplicated efforts.
- D. Assisting Victims
- 1. Deputies taking reports of identity theft should take those steps reasonably possible to help victims resolve their problem or complaint. This includes providing the following information through personal contact and providing a written brochure to the victim.

2. Cancel each credit, debit and charge card and request new cards with new account numbers.
3. Contact the three major credit reporting agencies and ask them to put a fraud alert on the account and add a victim statement requesting creditors to contact the victim before opening new accounts in his/her name. Also advise them to request a copy of their credit report.
4. If banks are involved, report the loss to each financial institution, cancel existing accounts and open new ones with new account numbers.
5. If driver's licenses are involved, report to the Motor Vehicle Administration in the state of issuance to report the loss/theft of license.
6. If Social Security numbers are involved, contact the Social Security Administration to obtain a new card.
7. If appropriate, change the locks on their house and cars if these have been copied or otherwise compromised.

## 5. Summary of Changes

- A. On 4/18/24 a 3-year review was conducted by Criminal Investigations Division (CID) and the following change was requested:
  1. Changed: Section 4.A.1 to read, "Complete an offense report in the Report Management System (RMS) with the appropriate classification and initiate an investigation"

Approved  
  
JEFFREY R. GAHLER  
SHERIFF  
DATE 4/24/24