

Notification of Rights for Wisconsin Consumers

You have a right to include a "security freeze" with your credit report, which will prohibit a consumer reporting agency from releasing information in your credit report in connection with a credit transaction without your express authorization. A security freeze must be requested in writing by certified mail or by any other means provided by a consumer reporting agency. The security freeze is designed to prevent an extension of credit, such as a loan, from being approved in your name without your consent. However, you should be aware that using a security freeze to take control over who gets access to the personal and financial information in your credit report may delay, interfere with, or prohibit the timely approval of any subsequent request or application you make regarding a loan, credit, mortgage, or Internet credit card transaction, including an extension of credit at point of sale.

When you request a security freeze for your credit report, you will be provided a personal identification number or password to use if you choose to remove the security freeze from your credit report or authorize the release of your credit report for a period of time after the security freeze is in place. To provide that authorization you must contact the consumer reporting agency and provide all of the following:

- (1) The personal identification number or password.
- (2) Proper identification to verify your identity.
- (3) The period of time for which the report shall be made available.
- (4) Payment of the appropriate fee.

A security freeze does not apply to a person or its affiliates, or collection agencies acting on behalf of a person, with which you have an existing account, that requests information in your credit report for the purposes of reviewing or collecting the account. Reviewing the account includes activities related to account maintenance, monitoring, credit line increases, and account upgrades and enhancements.

Unless you are a victim of identity theft with a police report to verify the crime, a consumer reporting agency has the right to charge you no more than \$10 to include a security freeze with your credit report, no more than \$10 to authorize release of a report that includes a security freeze, and no more than \$10 to remove a security freeze from your credit report.

Additional rights under your state's law, which are also in the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act, are explained in the enclosed Summary of Your Rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

WISCONSIN SECURITY FREEZE INFORMATION

Any consumer in Wisconsin may place a security freeze on his or her credit report by requesting it in writing. The consumer reporting agency is not allowed to charge a fee to victims for placing, removing for a specific period or specific party, or removing a security freeze on a credit report. To prove victim status, you must include a copy of a report to a law enforcement agency regarding identity theft. For all other consumers, a charge of \$10 will be applied for each placing, removing, or for each temporary lifting of a security freeze. A security freeze prohibits, with certain specific exceptions, the consumer reporting agency from releasing the consumer's credit report or any information from it without the express authorization of the consumer. The freeze goes into effect five (5) business days from receipt of the consumer's letter by the consumer reporting agency.

To obtain more detailed information on how to place a security freeze on your credit reports, see below.

HOW TO "FREEZE" YOUR CREDIT FILES

A security freeze means that your file cannot be shared with potential creditors. A security freeze can help prevent new account identity theft. Most businesses will not open credit accounts without first checking a consumer's credit history. If your credit files are frozen, even someone who has your name and Social Security number probably would not be able to obtain credit in your name. How do I place a security freeze? To place a freeze, you must write to each of the three consumer reporting agencies. You must provide identifying information. If you are a victim of identity theft, you must provide proof that you are a victim of identity theft. Proof includes reports to law enforcement agencies concerning identity theft. All others must pay a \$10 charge.

Write to all three addresses below and include the information that follows:

Equifax Security Freeze
P.O. Box 105788
Atlanta, GA 30348

Experian Security Freeze
P.O. Box 9554
Allen, TX 75013

TransUnion Security Freeze
P O Box 2000
Chester, PA 19016

For each, you must:

- Send a letter by certified mail;
- If you are a victim of identity theft, you must include evidence you made a report such as a copy of a police report, investigative report, or complaint to a law enforcement agency concerning identity theft;

- Provide your full name (including middle initial as well as Jr., Sr., II, III, etc.) address, Social Security number, and date of birth;
- If you have moved in the past 5 years, supply the addresses where you have lived over the prior 5 years.
- Provide proof of current address such as a current utility bill or phone bill
- Send a photocopy of a government issued identification card (state driver's license or ID card, military identification, etc.)
- If you are not a victim of identity theft, include payment by check, money order or credit card (Visa, American Express, Master Card or Discover cards only.)

How long does it take for a security freeze to go into effect? After five (5) business days from receiving your letter, the consumer reporting agencies listed above will place a freeze providing credit reports to potential creditors.

After ten (10) business days from receiving your letter to place a freeze on your account, the consumer reporting agencies will send you a confirmation letter containing a unique PIN (personal identification number) or password. Keep this PIN or password in a safe place.

Can I open new credit accounts if my files are frozen? Yes. You can have a security freeze lifted for a temporary period of time. This is done at no charge for victims. For everyone else, however, there is a \$10 charge for temporarily lifting the security freeze. The steps to do so are as follows:

- Contact the consumer reporting agencies above.
- The manner by which you contact them is determined by them, but it may be by way of telephone, fax or over the Internet.
- You must provide proper identification;
- You must provide your unique PIN or password;
- You must provide during what time period your credit report will be accessible. How long does it take for a security freeze to be lifted? Consumer reporting agencies must lift a freeze no later than three (3) business days from receiving your request.

What will a new creditor who requests my file see if it is frozen? A creditor will see a message or a code indicating the file is frozen.

Can a new creditor get my credit score if my file is frozen? No. A creditor who requests your file from one of the three consumer reporting agencies will only get a message or a code indicating that the file is frozen.

Can I order my own credit report if my file is frozen? Yes.

Can anyone see my credit file if it is frozen? When you have a security freeze on your credit file, certain entities still have access to it. Your report can still be released to your existing creditors or to collection agencies acting on their own behalf. They can use it to review or collect on your account. Other creditors may also use your information to make offers of credit. Government agencies may have access for collecting child support payments or taxes or for investigating Medicaid fraud. Government agencies may also have access in response to a court or administrative order, a subpoena, or a search warrant.

Do I have to freeze my file with all three consumer reporting agencies? Yes. Different credit issuers may use different consumer reporting agencies. If you want to stop your credit file from being viewed, you must freeze it with Equifax, Experian, and Trans Union.

If more than one person in my household wants to request a security freeze, do we each have to request a separate security freeze? Yes. Because each person has an individual credit history and credit reporting file, each person must make a separate request to place, lift or remove a security freeze. Each person also must pay any applicable fees.

Will a freeze lower my credit score? No.

Can an employer do a background check on my credit file? Yes. The Wisconsin security freeze applies to the release of your consumer report for any purpose related to the extension of credit.

Does freezing my file mean that I won't receive pre-approved credit offers? No. You can stop the pre-approved credit offers by calling 888-5OPTOUT (888-567-8688). Or you can do this online at www.optoutprescreen.com. This will stop most of the offers, the ones that go through the consumer reporting agencies. It's good for five years or you can make it permanent.

What law requires security freezes? The law on security freezes in **Wisconsin** begins at Chapter 100 Wisconsin Statutes Annotated § 100.54.

THIS FACT SHEET IS FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES. IT IS NOT LEGAL ADVICE. FOR LEGAL ADVICE, YOU MUST CONSULT YOUR OWN ATTORNEY.