

For immediate release

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OIPC releases identity theft guidance for public bodies, organizations, and individuals

VICTORIA – Identity fraud – often the result of identity theft – was the most [frequently reported type of fraud](#) in Canada in 2025, and the [Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre](#) estimates that the numbers reported are only a fraction of actual cases. New guidance from the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner (OIPC) for British Columbia aims to help public bodies, private sector organizations, and individuals prevent and respond to this threat.

Identity theft occurs when someone collects or uses personal information without permission to commit fraud or other crimes. It often results from a privacy breach – when a public body or organization fails to protect the personal information in its custody or control.

The OIPC’s guidance, [Identity theft in BC: Understanding, preventing, and responding to risks](#), outlines the obligations of public bodies and private sector organizations to safeguard personal information under BC’s privacy laws, and the steps they can take to respond to privacy breaches and help people whose information is at risk. The guidance provides an overview of what constitutes identity theft, and protections against it under relevant BC and federal laws.

An accompanying document, [Identity theft: Quick reference for public bodies and organizations](#), provides an overview of key points in the guidance, including security measures, breach response and how to support affected people. The OIPC also published an [infographic](#) outlining steps individuals can take to minimize the damage caused by identity theft, who they can contact, and recourse available through filing a privacy complaint.

These resources build on the OIPC’s longstanding support for public bodies and private organizations that have experienced privacy breaches. Over the years, the office has issued guidance on breach response and assessing and improving security measures, conducted investigations and audits of privacy practices, and issued formal orders under BC’s privacy laws to correct practices that lead to breaches.

“Identity theft can rob people of their financial security and peace of mind. Our privacy laws require public bodies and organizations to have safeguards in place to reduce the risk of the kind of privacy breaches that expose people’s personal information and lead to identity theft,” said Michael Harvey, Information and Privacy Commissioner for British Columbia. “This guidance provides practical steps to prevent breaches and to have a plan in place to respond quickly and effectively when one happens. It’s about getting people dealing with the aftermath of identity theft the support they need when they need it.”

Download:

Identity theft in BC: Understanding, preventing, and responding to risks:

<https://oipc.bc.ca/documents/guidance-documents/3219>

Identity theft: Quick reference for public bodies and organizations:

<https://oipc.bc.ca/documents/guidance-documents/3223>

Recovering from identity theft in BC (infographic): <https://oipc.bc.ca/documents/guidance-documents/3224>

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