

# Protect SIN #'s Or Risk Identity Fraud



*How secure is the SIN information you are collecting?*

Within 3 days of hiring a new employee you need to request a Social Insurance Number (SIN). As an employer, if you have any reason to suspect that an employee is using a fraudulent SIN number you must report it. If you have any reason to suspect the SIN information your organization collected has been compromised, stolen or misused, take immediate action. Inform your employees and report the problem to the police.

Those are some of the many rules and requirements employers must abide by regarding the collection, use and storage of SIN #'s in Canada. Stolen SIN #'s are commonly used for identity theft to fraudulently apply for work credit cards, loans, health insurance and more. Just how prevalent is SIN fraud in Canada?

## **Identity Fraud #'s in Canada**

Earlier this year, the government was forced to disclose that there were 1,072,999 instances in which private information held by the government was lost, stolen or accessed by unauthorized persons. It was disclosed that the public works department forwarded unencrypted SIN numbers for over 300,000 people and another 15,000 SIN numbers were handed over on a CD. The Student Loan Programs, Veterans Affairs, Revenue Canada and more all reported 10's of thousands of incidents where personal information was made vulnerable.

In 2009, the Canadian Anti-Fraud Center (CACF) reported that 11,095 Canadians filed identity fraud reports representing a loss of more than 10 million dollars. In 2012, there were a reported 17,000 cases of identity fraud costing victims a total of more than \$16 million.

## **No More SIN Cards**

For some people, mitigating risk includes not carrying their SIN card around with them or throwing information in the garbage without destroying it. In an attempt to help cut down on SIN card theft, the government will be phasing out the familiar plastic SIN Card. Canadians will still receive a number, sent by letter; the card will be gone.

## **Secure Your Personal Information**

For many people their SIN information is under someone else's control when made vulnerable. Remind your employees about protecting their own SIN and other personal identification information and the information of clients, customers and other employees. Ensure that steps are taken within your organization to secure the information you collect and check that it is not sitting on a laptop someone plans on taking home.

The government of Canada has put together a [ten tips for preventing identify theft](#) infographic you can share with your employees to remind them of steps they can take to secure their identity. And remind them that while they still have their plastic SIN cards, they should leave them at home.

## **Resources**

[Services Canada Employers What You Need To Know About Social Insurance Numbers](#)

[Services Canada – SIN Employers Responsibilities](#)

[Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre Criminal Intelligence Analytical Unit Annual Report 2012: Mass Marketing Fraud & ID Theft Activity](#)