Identity theft is one of the most nefarious crimes out there. Here are seven ways to help protect yourself:

**Secure Your Hard Copies**
Every sensitive document should be kept in a safe. Credit cards and debit cards should be securely placed in your wallet at all times.

*BONUS TIP:* Shred all aged documents that contain sensitive information.

**Choose Strong Passwords**
Use different, strong passwords for each of your accounts and devices.

*BONUS TIP:* Use a secure password service to create and store unique passwords.

**Examine Your Financial Statements**
Review your financial statements monthly and check carefully for fraudulent activity. Report any suspicious charges immediately.

*BONUS TIP:* Sign up for alerts and limit your credit card activity to a specific geographic area.

**Protect Your Computer**
Invest in a strong anti-spyware program to protect your hardware from hackers.

*BONUS TIP:* Encrypt your hard drive for an extra level of protection.

**Be Wary of Suspicious Emails and Websites**
Don’t open suspicious-looking emails or click on links for unfamiliar sites.

**Use Two-Factor Identification**
The extra log-in step will help ward off scammers and add another layer of security to your accounts.

*BONUS TIP:* Never elect to have a device “remember your password” for a site that involves payments of any kind.

**Avoid Public Wi-Fi**
Public Wi-Fi is a great hunting ground for thieves; steer clear if you can. At the very least, avoid all online banking or password logins while using public Wi-Fi.

*BONUS TIP:* Secure your own home Wi-Fi with a strong password.

Report scams to (718) 556-SCAM(7226) or email reportscams@rcda.nyc.gov