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**For Immediate Release**

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# DA Urges Consumers to Protect Themselves in Wake of Equifax Hack

## *Data Breach Affects Some 143 Million Consumers in the U.S.*

San Diego County District Attorney [Summer Stephan](#) warned consumers today to consider taking steps to protect their personal identifying information in the wake of a recent data breach at one of the large credit bureaus in the United States, Equifax. Cybercriminals stole 143 million credit records in the recent hacking scandal at the big-three credit bureau.

“At this point millions of consumers have to assume that the bad guys have highly personal information that they can use to trick you,” said District Attorney Summer Stephan. “Our ‘CATCH’ team has [posted advice for consumers online](#) and I encourage San Diego County residents to consider taking steps to protect themselves.”

Experts say to watch out for the following:

- Phishing (phony) emails that claim to be from Equifax where you can check if your data was compromised.
- Phishing emails that claim there is a problem with a credit card, your credit record, or other personal financial information.
- Calls from scammers that claim they are from your bank or credit union.
- Fraudulent charges on any credit card because your identity was stolen.

Here are five things you can do to prevent identify theft:

Sign up for credit monitoring (there are many companies providing that service including Equifax, but be sure to read the Terms of Agreement carefully and note if there are any set-up or recurring costs associated with the monitoring.)

Place a fraud alert with one of the major credit bureaus Equifax, Experian and TransUnion. Placing a fraud alert is free and stays on your credit report for 90 days.

Check your credit reports for free at [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com)

Check your bank and credit card statements for any unauthorized activity.

If you believe you may have been the victim of identity theft, here are two sites where you can learn more about how to protect yourself: <http://www.idtheftcenter.org> and [www.ftc.gov/idtheft](http://www.ftc.gov/idtheft)