

CORA Capital Advisors recommends taking the following steps:

- Get a current credit report.**
- Consider placing a freeze on your accounts.**

DON'T LET THE EQUIFAX DATA BREACH OVERWHELM YOU.

According to Seena Gressin, attorney for the Federal Trade Commission, "If you have a credit report, there's a good chance that you're one of the **143 million American consumers whose sensitive personal information was exposed** in a data breach at Equifax, one of the nation's three major credit reporting agencies."

Equifax claims that the breach lasted from mid-May through July of 2017. The hackers accessed people's names, Social Security numbers, birth dates, addresses and, in some instances, driver's license numbers. They also stole credit card numbers for about 209,000 people and documents with personal identifying information for about 182,000 people.

Now you may be asking, what can I do to protect myself? Our advisors recommend that you always be aware of your credit report.

The first thing you should do is visit the annual free credit report website at <https://www.annualcreditreport.com/index.action>.

This website allows you to access your credit reports once a year for free so that you can monitor identifiable personal information, open and closed credit accounts and the accuracy of information reported to the credit monitoring companies.

It is important that you understand the information on your credit report and this website will help you do so. If you discover inaccuracies, you should contact the credit issuer and the credit reporting agency.

Secondly, the three major credit reporting companies allow you to freeze your credit report access. This will make it significantly more difficult for someone to steal your identity and/or open an account using your personal information.

To place a freeze on your credit, you can contact each of the nationwide credit reporting companies by phone below (or visit their respective websites).

- Equifax — 800.349.9960
- Experian — 888.973.742
- TransUnion — 888.909.8872

You'll need to supply your name, address, date of birth, Social Security number and other personal information. **The fees to accomplish this commonly range from \$5 to \$10.** Congress is working to remove these fees in the future.

After receiving your freeze request, each credit reporting company will send you a confirmation letter containing a unique PIN (personal identification number) or password. Keep the PIN or password in a safe place. You will need it if you choose to lift the freeze. Temporary lifts are allowed if you need to make a purchase that would require a credit check, for example, the purchase of a new car. The fee is generally \$5 for doing this as well. You can lift the freeze temporarily online or calling each company individually.

Please note that it will not stop prescreened offers of credit in the mail or over the phone. You can opt out of prescreened mailings as well by calling 888-567-8688 (5OPTOUT).

If you feel more comfortable, you could always employ a fraud alert company such as Life Lock or ALLClearID. None of these options will guarantee protection from identity fraud, but they certainly will deter certain types of scammers and slow others down.

The material presented has been prepared for informational purposes, and is meant only as a starting point for credit report issues. It is not meant as individualized tax, legal or accounting advice. Please consult your professional advisor for further information. Securities offered through American Portfolios Financial Services, Inc. Member FINRA/SIPC. Investment advisory services offered through American Portfolios Advisors, Inc., an SEC Registered Investment Advisor. CORA CAPITAL ADVISORS, LLC is not affiliated with APFS and APA.



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