

Notice of Privacy Incident

Valley County writes to inform you of an incident that may affect the security of some of your personal information. While we are unaware of any actual misuse of your information, we want to provide you with information about the incident, our response, and resources available to you to help protect your information from possible misuse, should you feel it necessary to do so.

On or around April 6, 2021, Valley County became aware of a potential configuration issue relating to an online portal used for public record searches. The portal utilized a software licensed from a third-party vendor to house documents online, allowing county residents to search for copies of their recorded documents, including marriage licenses, death certificates, and other court records. We discovered some of these documents were not properly redacted by the software and that personal information in these documents could have potentially been accessible to the public via the portal between January of 2020 and April of 2021. Though we have no evidence of attempted or actual misuse of this information, as a precautionary measure, the documents available on the online portal were taken down and then reviewed to determine what, if any, personal information may have been contained within the records. On August 11, 2021, this extensive review identified certain personal information was present within the records. Since then, Valley County has been undertaking efforts to locate address information for those individuals whose information was present in the records at the time of this event and began providing notice once it was confident that it had the correct contact information.

We take this incident and the security of personal information in our care seriously. Upon learning of this incident, we moved quickly to investigate and respond to this incident, assess the security of the relevant portal, and notify potentially affected individuals. Our response included reviewing the contents of the information available on the online portal to determine whether it contained personal information and reviewing internal systems to identify contact information for purposes of providing notice to potentially affected individuals. As part of our ongoing commitment to the security of information, we are also reviewing and enhancing existing policies and procedures to reduce the likelihood of a similar future event.

In an abundance of caution, we are providing you with notice of this incident along with complimentary access to credit monitoring and identity restoration services for affected individuals, and information on what you can do to better protect against the possibility of identity theft and fraud. Information on how to enroll in the credit monitoring services will be included in the letter sent to those whose information may have been accessible. You can also review the information below for guidance on how to protect personal information.

Valley County understands you may have questions that are not addressed here. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding this incident, or inquiries regarding the credit monitoring services being offered, please call our dedicated, toll-free number at (888) 994-0269 from the hours of 8 a.m. and 10 p.m. Monday – Friday CST and Saturday and Sunday between the hours of 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. CST.

Steps You Can Take to Protect Personal Information

Under U.S. law, a consumer is entitled to one free credit report annually from each of the three major credit reporting bureaus, Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion. To order your free credit report, visit www.annualcreditreport.com or call, toll-free, 1-877-322-8228. You may also directly contact the three major credit reporting bureaus listed below to request a free copy of your credit report.

Consumers have the right to place an initial or extended “fraud alert” on a credit file at no cost. An initial fraud alert is a 1-year alert that is placed on a consumer’s credit file. Upon seeing a fraud alert display on a consumer’s credit file, a business is required to take steps to verify the consumer’s identity before

extending new credit. If you are a victim of identity theft, you are entitled to an extended fraud alert, which is a fraud alert lasting seven years. Should you wish to place a fraud alert, please contact any one of the three major credit reporting bureaus listed below.

As an alternative to a fraud alert, consumers have the right to place a “credit freeze” on a credit report, which will prohibit a credit bureau from releasing information in the credit report without the consumer’s express authorization. The credit freeze is designed to prevent credit, loans, and services from being approved in your name without your consent. However, you should be aware that using a credit freeze to take control over who gets access to the personal and financial information in your credit report may delay, interfere with, or prohibit the timely approval of any subsequent request or application you make regarding a new loan, credit, mortgage, or any other account involving the extension of credit. Pursuant to federal law, you cannot be charged to place or lift a credit freeze on your credit report. To request a security freeze, you will need to provide the following information:

1. Full name (including middle initial as well as Jr., Sr., II, III, etc.);
2. Social Security number;
3. Date of birth;
4. Addresses for the prior two to five years;
5. Proof of current address, such as a current utility bill or telephone bill;
6. A legible photocopy of a government-issued identification card (state driver’s license or ID card, etc.); and
7. A copy of either the police report, investigative report, or complaint to a law enforcement agency concerning identity theft if you are a victim of identity theft.

Should you wish to place a credit freeze, please contact the three major credit reporting bureaus listed below:

Equifax	Experian	TransUnion
https://www.equifax.com/personal/credit-report-services/	https://www.experian.com/help/	https://www.transunion.com/credit-help
888-298-0045	1-888-397-3742	833-395-6938
Equifax Fraud Alert, P.O. Box 105069 Atlanta, GA 30348-5069	Experian Fraud Alert, P.O. Box 9554, Allen, TX 75013	TransUnion Fraud Alert, P.O. Box 2000, Chester, PA 19016
Equifax Credit Freeze, P.O. Box 105788 Atlanta, GA 30348-5788	Experian Credit Freeze, P.O. Box 9554, Allen, TX 75013	TransUnion Credit Freeze, P.O. Box 160, Woodlyn, PA 19094

Additional Information

You may further educate yourself regarding identity theft, fraud alerts, credit freezes, and the steps you can take to protect your personal information by contacting the consumer reporting bureaus, the Federal Trade Commission, or your state Attorney General. The Federal Trade Commission may be reached at: 600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20580; www.identitytheft.gov; 1-877-ID-THEFT (1-877-438-4338); and TTY: 1-866-653-4261. The Federal Trade Commission also encourages those who discover that their information has been misused to file a complaint with them. You can obtain further information on how to file such a complaint by way of the contact information listed above. You have the right to file a police report if you ever experience identity theft or fraud. Please note that in order to file a report with law enforcement for identity theft, you will likely need to provide some proof that you have been a victim. Instances of known or suspected identity theft should also be reported to law enforcement and your state Attorney General. This notice has not been delayed by law enforcement.