

## **North Carolina Consumers Have the Right to Obtain a Security Freeze**

You have a right to place a "security freeze" on your credit report pursuant to North Carolina law. The security freeze will prohibit a consumer reporting agency from releasing any information in your credit report without your express authorization. A security freeze must be requested in writing by certified mail.

The security 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 security freeze to take control over who gains 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 new loans, credit, mortgage, insurance, rental housing, employment, investment, license, cellular phone, utilities, digital signature, Internet credit card transactions, or other services, including an extension of credit at point of sale.

The freeze will be placed within five business days. When you place a security freeze on your credit report, within 10 business days, you will be provided a personal identification number or a password to use when you want to remove or lift temporarily the security freeze.

A freeze does not apply when you have an existing account relationship and a copy of your report is requested by your existing creditor or its agents or affiliates for certain types of account review, collection, fraud control, or similar activities.

You should plan ahead and lift a freeze if you are actively seeking credit or services as a security freeze may slow your applications, as mentioned above.

You can remove a freeze or authorize temporary access for a specific period of time by contacting the consumer reporting agency and providing all of the following:

- (1) Your personal identification number or password,
- (2) Proper identification to verify your identity, and
- (3) Proper information regarding the period of time you want your report available to users of the credit report.

A consumer reporting agency that receives a request from you to temporarily lift a freeze on a credit report shall comply with the request no later than three business days after receiving the request. A consumer reporting agency may charge you up to ten dollars (\$ 10.00) for each time you freeze, remove the freeze, or temporarily lift the freeze for a period of time, except a consumer reporting agency may not charge any amount to a victim of identify theft who has submitted a copy of a valid investigative or incident report or complaint with a law enforcement agency about the unlawful use of the victim's identifying information by another person.

You have a right to bring a civil action against someone who violates your rights under the credit reporting laws. The action can be brought against a consumer reporting agency or a user of your credit report.