

Answering your questions regarding the recent Equifax Data Breach

With the recent Equifax Data Breach, The American National Bank wanted to provide you with some guidelines from industry experts. These are meant to help you make an informed decision on what is best for your unique needs, but the decision on what will work best for you is up to you.

1 Visit www.equifaxsecurity2017.com

Visit the above website if you are not sure if your information has been compromised. This is an online service Equifax has set up for consumers to check whether their information may have been compromised.

2 Check all of your accounts via online services - this includes your bank accounts, credit card accounts and your credit reports from all three bureaus

If you have not set up access to an online account, call the company directly and ask for assistance. You should be looking for discrepancies in the purchasing habits. It is critical to stay vigilant for the months to come - just because the bad guys might have your information now doesn't mean they will use it now, they may wait a while.

To check your credit reports, visit www.annualcreditreport.com. Each consumer is entitled to one free credit report from each of the three credit reporting agencies (TransUnion, Experian and Equifax) each year. You can either order one, two or all three to review.

3 Decide if you'd like to put a credit alert or credit freeze on your credit reports

You don't have to do either of these things, but they are both options available to you.

Credit alerts last for 90 days and are free. You can renew credit alerts at the end of the 90 days, but you have to contact one of the credit bureaus to renew the alerts. If you contact one of the three credit bureaus to place an alert on your report, that agency will contact the other two on your behalf.

Credit freezes will not allow anyone - not even you - to open new credit (loans, credit cards, etc.) without having the freeze lifted. When you freeze an account, you are provided with a pin number that you can use to un-freeze your credit report - should you decide at a later date to open new credit.

If you choose to do a credit freeze, in the State of Wisconsin, it costs consumers \$10 for each credit reporting agency. However, if requested prior to November 10, 2017, Equifax is waiving the fee for their agency only. It is important to note that there will also be a \$10 fee/agency anytime you want to un-freeze the account (ie, to open a new car loan), and another \$10 if you want to refreeze the credit bureaus once you are done obtaining credit. If you choose to go this route, it is also important to note that you will need to contact all three of the credit reporting agencies to have the freeze placed (or removed) for all credit inquiries.

4 Register for eNotify from Wisconsin Department of Motor Vehicles

This service allows you to set up alerts confirming transactions with your drivers license. If you didn't request the transaction, this service is an early detection system that someone has your information and is making changes.