

Credit freezes: A perfect Solution

A credit freeze is one way to protect yourself against identity theft. It entails restricting access to your credit report to minimize the chance of identity thieves opening new accounts in your name. Once established, you will need to give your personal consent for your credit to be viewed.

Since creditors need to view your credit report before approving any new accounts opened in your name, a credit freeze is one way to stay ahead of fraud and is especially SMART if you suspect that someone has already gained access to your personal information.

There are NO DOWNSIDES to a credit freeze. A credit freeze won't affect your credit in any harmful way. It doesn't affect your credit score. It won't pose any difficulties to renting an apartment, applying for insurance or applying for a home mortgage, and you'll still be able to open new credit card accounts. You simply will need to lift the freeze temporarily in order to do so. The best part is it's free in New York State!

How to freeze your credit

Freezing your credit is free and relatively simple to do. You'll need to contact the 3 major credit bureaus separately and provide your personal information (i.e., SSN, birthday, etc.). Then you'll be given a password, which is what you'll also use to unfreeze your credit when needed. Save it in a safe, secure place. Freezing your credit is a simple and a perfect way to prevent fraud and identity theft.

How to place or lift a security freeze on your credit report

<https://www.usa.gov/credit-freeze> You must contact each of the three major credit bureaus listed below: Equifax, Experian and TransUnion individually to freeze your credit. (The least busy day to call is Wednesdays)

- **Equifax:** Call (888) 766-0008, (800) 349-9960, or (800) 685-1111 or (866) 640-2273 or (800) 525-6285
Online at: <https://www.equifax.com/personal/credit-report-services/>
Check out the step-by-step how EQUIFAX credit freeze guide at <https://www.nerdwallet.com/article/finance/equifax-credit-freeze>
- **Experian:** Call (888) 397-3742 or (714) 830-7000
Online at: <https://www.experian.com/freeze/center.html>
Here's a detailed walk-through guide on getting an Experian credit freeze in place <https://www.nerdwallet.com/article/finance/experian-credit-freeze>
- **Trans Union** Call (800) 680-7289, (800) 916-8800 or (888) 909-8872
Online at: <https://www.transunion.com/credit-freeze>
Access and read the TransUnion credit freeze guide at: <https://www.nerdwallet.com/article/finance/transunion-credit-freeze>