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**CITY OFFICIALS ANNOUNCE 2ND ANNUAL SHRED FEST TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT IDENTITY THEFT**

***Free Personal Shredders to be Given Away to First Five Shred Fest Participants at Each of 11 Locations Across City***

***City Offers Tips to Consumers and Businesses to Help Prevent the Fastest Growing Crime in the Country***

Consumer Affairs Commissioner Jonathan Mintz, Criminal Justice Coordinator John Feinblatt and officials from the Departments of Parks & Recreation and Sanitation today announced the City's 2nd Annual Shred Fest, a free paper-shredding event to increase public awareness of identity theft prevention. The public officials stressed to New Yorkers the importance of shredding documents that contain personal identifying information before throwing them away. Last year, nearly 12,000 New Yorkers became victims of identity theft, the fastest growing crime in the country. Document shredding is one of the most important ways New Yorkers can protect their identities. Shred Fest will be held on Sunday, May 3 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 11 locations throughout the five boroughs. New Yorkers can bring personal documents to be shredded by industrial shredders, and also will receive information on how better to guard against identify theft and have an opportunity to receive one of 55 personal paper shredders donated by Staples. Shredding services have been generously donated by Brink's Document Destruction, Code Shred, SafeGuard Document Destruction, and USA Shred. All of the shredded paper generated by Shred Fest will be recycled.

"An estimated 10 million Americans have their identities stolen every year, but most consumers don't realize that they are actually their own best identity protectors!" stressed Consumer Affairs Commissioner Jonathan Mintz. "The City's 11-site, 5-borough Shred Fest caps our month-long campaign to raise public awareness about identity theft protection, and will help empower New Yorkers to take proactive steps to protect their own or their customers' sensitive personal information throughout the year."

"Identity Theft has become the most common financial crime in America," said John Feinblatt, the Mayor's Criminal Justice Coordinator. "But New Yorkers can stand up to ID theft. With a bit of vigilance and some careful planning, criminals will have fewer chances to profit off of your good name."

"Don't be a victim of identity theft! Your private documents are better shred than read, so bring your personal documents to be shredded and recycled, all while enjoying our public parks," said Parks & Recreation Commissioner Adrian Benepe. "Public parks are accessible gathering places and we are pleased that many of them are hosting Shred

Fest."

"Shred Fest gives residents an opportunity to safeguard their identities by keeping confidential paperwork containing sensitive data out of the public waste and recycling streams where they may be viewed either on public streets or at transfer sites. Plus, it encourages paper recycling. The Department is also pleased to have contributed to the outreach for this event by displaying colorful Shred Fest posters on the sides of all 2,000 DSNY collection trucks and 450 mechanical sweepers," said Sanitation Commissioner John J. Doherty.

"I want to applaud Commissioner Mintz and his staff for their leadership on this issue," stated New York City Council Deputy Majority Leader Leroy Comrie (D-Queens).

"Identify theft continues to be a problem in my Southeast Queens community, where there is a large senior citizen population who are more susceptible to this crime than most. I want to encourage all New Yorkers to use the occasion of the annual Shred Fest to review the safeguarding of their personal documents. Additionally, I want to encourage family and friends to outreach to their older relatives about this issue."

"The 2nd Annual Shred Fest raises awareness for how important it is to properly dispose of personal documents," said Mike Nelson, Vice President of Staples Brands. "Through events like these, and innovative technology found on our new line of Staples brand shredders, Staples makes it easy for small business and consumers to protect themselves from the dangers of identity theft."

New Yorkers are invited to bring boxes or bags of personal documents, mail or any paper materials to be shredded, and securely disposed of, at the 11 Shred Fest locations throughout the City, including:

- Bank statements that are at least one year old and do not contain tax-related information
- Pay stubs (only after you have received your Form W-2)
- Credit card applications
- Documents that contain Social Security Numbers, account numbers, password/PIN information, birth dates, private contact information and signatures.

Documents will be shredded in industrial shredders mounted with TV monitors so consumers can verify for themselves that their materials are being shredded securely. Stapled documents can be shredded; however, documents bound with metal binder clips cannot.

New Yorkers can take their documents to one of the following 11 locations to be shredded:

**BRONX:**

- Bronx Park (Corner of Boston Road and Bronx Park East; near Ben Abrams Playground)
- Franz Sigel Park (Corner of East 158th Street and Grand Concourse)

**BROOKLYN:**

- Bensonhurst Park (Cropsey Avenue and Bay 29th Street)
- Cadman Plaza (Cadman Plaza West; opposite Clark Street)

- Prospect Park (Prospect Park West and 5th Street)

#### **MANHATTAN:**

- Central Park (Merchant's Gate/Columbus Circle; Corner of Central Park South and Central Park West)
- St. Nicholas Park (Corner of West 135th Street and St. Nicholas Avenue)
- Union Square (North Plaza; East 16th Street and Union Square West)

#### **QUEENS:**

- Doughboy Plaza (52nd Street and Woodside Avenue)
- Flushing Meadows Corona Park (parking lot at 111th Street and 54th Avenue)

#### **STATEN ISLAND:**

- Richmond County Flea Market (454 New Dorp Lane; Opposite New Dorp High School)

Shred Fest caps DCA's month-long, multilingual public awareness campaign which included the distribution of 15,000 Shred Fest flyers with identity theft prevention tips, posting 400 Shred Fest posters in English and Spanish, and an advertising campaign with the Department of Sanitation to promote the free paper-shredding event.

On Wednesday, April 29, DCA will co-host a workshop for New York City businesses on how to help prevent fraud and identity theft, in partnership with the Federal Trade Commission, the Center on Law and Information Policy at Fordham Law School, New York State Consumer Protection Board, the New York State Office of Cyber Security and Critical Infrastructure Coordination, the Better Business Bureau Serving Metropolitan New York, and the International Association of Privacy Professionals.

For more identity theft prevention tips or to find a Shred Fest location near you, visit [www.nyc.gov/consumers](http://www.nyc.gov/consumers) or call 311.

DCA enforces the Consumer Protection Law and other related business laws throughout New York City. Ensuring a fair and vibrant marketplace for consumers and businesses, DCA licenses more than 70,000 businesses in 55 different industries. Through targeted outreach, partnerships with community and trade organizations, and informational materials, DCA educates consumers and businesses alike about their rights and responsibilities. DCA's Office of Financial Empowerment is the first municipal office of its kind in the nation with a mission to educate, empower and protect New Yorkers with low incomes to help them make the best use of their financial resources to move forward economically. For more information, call 311 or visit DCA online at [www.nyc.gov/consumers](http://www.nyc.gov/consumers).

The Criminal Justice Coordinator is the Mayor's chief policy advisor on criminal justice matters and is responsible for developing and implementing policies, legislation, and strategies in the fields of public safety and criminal justice. The Office of the Criminal Justice Coordinator also serves as a liaison to the City's prosecutors, the New York State Office of Court Administration, and state and federal criminal justice agencies. The Coordinator's Office works closely with the City's law enforcement agencies, including the Police, Correction, Probation, and Juvenile Justice Departments.

## IT'S YOUR IDENTITY...PROTECT IT! FOLLOW THESE TIPS:

- **Shred first, trash last.** *Never* throw out papers with sensitive information, such as your Social Security Number, until you've shredded them.
- **Be careful when you receive suspicious telephone and e-mail offers.** Never give personal information over the phone and *never* click on unfamiliar e-mail links, particularly e-mails from financial service providers.
- **Safeguard your computer using antivirus and firewall software.**
- **Check receipts.** Make sure receipts do not show your credit card's expiration date or more than its last five digits.
- **Review your bank and credit card statements for unusual activity.** Monitor when your monthly bills and account statements typically arrive and review your statements carefully.
- **Check your credit report for unusual activity.** Request your free annual credit report online at [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com) or call 1-877-322-8228.
- **Opt out of mail solicitations.** Register your address at [www.optoutprescreen.com](http://www.optoutprescreen.com) or call toll-free 1-888-567-8688.

## ALREADY AN IDENTITY THEFT VICTIM? TAKE ACTION QUICKLY:

- **Report it.** Report identity theft to your local police precinct and file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov) or call the FTC's Identity Theft Hotline toll-free at (877) ID-THEFT (438-4338). Keep copies of the report and the complaint.
- **Consider a credit freeze.** A credit freeze restricts others from accessing your credit report without your consent. Place a credit freeze by contacting the three credit reporting agencies: Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion. Visit [www.nyc.gov/consumers](http://www.nyc.gov/consumers) for more information.

## IS YOUR BUSINESS PROTECTING CUSTOMERS' INFORMATION? HERE'S HOW:

- **Implement security protocols.** Review how your business protects customer information—i.e., where information is stored and who has access to it—and change protocols as necessary to increase security. Train employees so they know the company's privacy policy and how to protect customers' personal information.
- **Ask for ID.** Employees should ask for identification when customers pay by credit card. If employees are suspicious of a transaction and think the card may be stolen, they should call the store's credit card processing service and report a "Code 10." This phrase unobtrusively alerts the credit card company of potential identity theft activity.
- **Collect less information.** Only collect the information necessary to complete the transaction and store it only as long as needed. The less customer information you store, the less you have to protect.
- **Restrict access.** Make sure documents that contain customers' identifying information, such as applications or merchant copies of credit card receipts, are not in sight of employees or the public, or otherwise accessible. A locked storage space can offer good protection.
- **Safeguard computers.** Install antivirus and firewall software on computers and regularly update it. Make sure that password-protected screen savers turn on once a computer is idle.
- **Stay current with online security measures.** Your technology manager should remain aware of new issues or areas of concern in online security.

Check with the Federal Trade Commission at [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov) for recommended resources about technology updates.