

Friday, May 17, 2013

Pre-event:

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CITY HOSTS 6TH ANNUAL CITYWIDE SHRED FEST TO HELP NEW YORKERS PROTECT THEIR IDENTITY

First Five Participants at Each of 10 Locations in All Five Boroughs Will Receive a Free Personal Shredder from Staples

Almost 3,000 New Yorkers Shredded More Than 58 Tons of Paper Containing Personal Information at the 5th Annual Shred Fest

PHOTO OP: DCA Associate Commissioner Kay Sarlin will be available for interviews in Union Square on Sunday, May 19th from 10 – 11am (rain or shine). Cintas Document Management will demonstrate the shredding process.

The Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) Associate Commissioner Kay Sarlin and the shred company Cintas Document Management will gather in Union Square this Sunday for the City's sixth annual Shred Fest, a free paper- shredding event to increase public awareness about identity theft prevention. On Sunday, from 10am to 4pm, New Yorkers can visit one of 10 locations in all five boroughs to shred personal documents such as bank statements, paycheck stubs and credit card applications. Documents are shredded in industrial shredders mounted with TV monitors so consumers can verify for themselves that their materials are shredded securely. All shredded material is securely disposed of and recycled. Complimentary personal paper shredders, donated by Staples, will be given to the first five people to arrive at each location. Shred Fest is hosted by the Department of Consumer Affairs and the Mayor's Office of the Criminal Justice Coordinator in cooperation of the Department of Parks & Recreation, the Department of Sanitation and the Municipal Credit Union. For a list of all locations and identity theft prevention tips, visit nyc.gov/shredfest or call 311. The event also received generous support from **Staples**, **Cintas**, **LionCage Shredding**, and **Time Shred Services Inc.**

"Identity theft has been the fastest-growing crime in America for more than a decade, and affects as many as 10 million Americans each year. People may not learn that they have been victims for weeks after the criminal activity started, but complications may follow them for months, or even years," said DCA Commissioner Jonathan Mintz. "Our goal is to educate New Yorkers about being proactive in preventing identity theft. During Shred Fest, New Yorkers can safely shred and recycle papers containing personal information for free, learn how to be vigilant to detect any problem that might appear on their records, and get other helpful identity theft prevention tips."

"Shred Fest is a free, easy and secure service for New Yorkers to discard their personal documents and avoid becoming victims of identity theft," said John Feinblatt, the Criminal Justice Coordinator and Chief Advisor to the Mayor for Policy and Strategic Planning. "Identity theft can turn your life upside down, which is why everyone should take precautions including shredding important documents, so personal information doesn't end up in the wrong hands."

"Participating in Shred Fest is a win-win for New York City," said Sanitation Commissioner John J. Doherty. "Residents will benefit with an opportunity to keep their personal information safe, and the environment will benefit as tons of shredded paper will be taken to proper facilities for recycling."

The Federal Trade Commission reported this year that, for the 13th year in a row, its top complaint was identity theft with over 21,500 New Yorkers filing identity theft complaints. Shredding documents that contain personal identifying information before throwing them away is one of the most important ways consumers can prevent identity theft. Last year, almost 3,000 New Yorkers shredded more than 58 tons of paper containing personal information at Shred Fest.

"Municipal Credit Union is pleased to participate in Shred Fest again this year. MCU places a very high priority on keeping our members' information safe and secure, as well as educating our members on identity theft and how it could affect their financial well-being. Our participation in Shred Fest and partnership with the Department of Consumer Affairs is one key way we do this. We hope everyone takes advantage of this opportunity to protect themselves from identity theft and visits one of the 10 Shred Fest locations throughout the city to safely discard their personal information," said MCU President/CEO Kam Wong.

"Identity theft is a growing threat for individuals and businesses across the nation," explained Karen Carnahan, president and COO of Cintas Document Management. "This event will bring awareness of proper document management to the community and provide them with a secure method to safely dispose information. More importantly, it will provide individuals with the peace of mind that their sensitive information will not end up in the wrong hands."

"LionCage Shredding is thrilled to participate in this year's Shred Fest. As identity theft increases the only sure way to make sure your documents don't end up in the wrong hands is to have them shredded in front of you. With LionCage's state-of-the-art trucks now offering a superfine shred there is zero chance of your secure documents being put back together," said LionCage Vice President of Business Development Mark Kolodny.

"Shredding protects you and the environment," said Time Shred Services President Sean Gilgan. "Time Shred Services is happy to assist the great City of NY with bringing attention to the importance of protecting yourself from identity theft."

New Yorkers are invited to bring mail and other documents that contain personal information to be shredded and securely disposed. Stapled documents can be shredded, however, documents bound with metal binder clips cannot. Suggested documents include:

- 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 your Social Security Numbers, account numbers, password/PIN information, birth dates, private contact information and signatures

Shred Fest is part of DCA's ongoing campaign to raise awareness about what New Yorkers can do to protect themselves from identity theft. The campaign also included distribution of 15,000 Shred Fest flyers in English and Spanish, posting 600 Shred Fest posters in English and Spanish, 5,000 advertisements displayed on the Department of Sanitation's trucks and sweepers to promote the free paper-shredding event. Municipal Credit Union also publicized the event in a mailing to almost 300,000 members. City employees are not eligible for the free shredders.

DCA enforces the Consumer Protection Law and other related business laws throughout New York City. Empowering consumers and businesses to ensure a fair and vibrant marketplace, DCA licenses about 79,000 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. The DCA Office of Financial Empowerment (OFE) was launched by Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg at the end of 2006 as the first local government initiative in the country with the specific mission to educate, empower, and protect individuals and families with low incomes. OFE creates innovative programs, products, and services for New Yorkers so they can build assets and make the most of their financial resources. Our goal is to increase access to high-quality, low-cost financial education and

counseling; connect individuals to safe and affordable mainstream banking and products and services; improve access to income-boosting tax credits, savings, and other asset building opportunities; and enforce and improve consumer financial protections to safeguard financial stability. For more information, call 311 or visit DCA online at 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:

Protect Your Personal Information

- **Be alert to suspicious offers by phone, mail, text, and email. Avoid giving personal information over the phone, by email, text, or on social media sites. Never** click on unfamiliar links even if they are from sources you trust; they could be "phishing" scams that trick you into sharing personal information by looking trustworthy. And remember email addresses and phone numbers can be spoofed (or faked) to look like they are from someone you know.
- **Protect your computer, tablet, and smartphone against viruses and "malware" with security and firewall software.** Avoid typing your personal information when using unsecured Wi-Fi; create strong, personal passwords; and only download software and apps from trusted sources. Don't overshare personal information on social media sites and be cautious with geotagging softwares. Visit OnGuardOnline.gov for more information on how to be safe, secure, and responsible online.
- **Be careful when using public computers.** Delete any personal documents and empty the Recycle Bin on the desktop before you log off. Check Internet settings and make sure the computer is set to delete your browsing history. Never use your credit or debit card to make online purchases on public computers.
- **Review your free credit report every year.** As one way to see if you have been the victim of identity theft, download your free annual credit report at annualcreditreport.com.
- **Limit the cards you carry with you.** Only carry credit or debit cards you plan to use and store others in a safe place. Never carry your Social Security card in your purse or wallet.

Monitor Your Mail

- **Be aware when your monthly bills and account statements typically arrive.** Be on alert for missing statements in the mail. Sign up for electronic statements and online bill pay to avoid the risk of an identity thief using your mail.
- **Review your bank and credit card statements for unusual activity.** Even a few minutes' look can alert you early to a problem.
- **Put your mail on hold when you go on vacation.** Visit usps.com/holdmail or call 1-800-275-8777 to request Hold Mail Service.

Be Aware When Shopping

- **Check receipts.** Make sure receipts do not show your credit card's expiration date or more than its last five digits. The law requires this of New York City businesses.
- **Keep your eye on your credit card when making a purchase.** Some employees have used handheld machines illegally to swipe card information and use it later to hack into accounts.

Reduce Paper

- **Just shred it!** Machine shred papers you no longer need to save, rather than throwing them out, if they contain personal information such as your:
 - Social Security Number
 - Bank and credit card account numbers
 - Password/PIN information
 - Birth date
 - Private contact information
 - Signature
- **Go paperless.** Request online account statements and pay online whenever possible.

ALREADY AN IDENTITY THEFT VICTIM? TAKE ACTION QUICKLY:

- **Close all fraudulent accounts.** Call the Fraud Department of each company where an account was fraudulently opened in your name or shows purchases you did not make.
- **Report it.** Report identity theft to your local police precinct and file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at [ftc.gov/idtheft](https://www.ftc.gov/idtheft) or call 1-877-ID-THEFT (1-877-438-4338). Keep copies of the report and the complaint.
- **Place a fraud alert on your credit report with one of the three credit reporting agencies: Equifax, Experian, TransUnion.** By placing a fraud alert on your credit report, creditors must contact you before opening any new accounts or making any changes to your existing accounts. Carefully document all correspondence.
- **Consider free, one-on-one, professional financial counseling.** Visit [nyc.gov](https://www.nyc.gov) or call 311 and ask for an NYC Financial Empowerment Center near you. Counselors can help you sort out your financial difficulties.

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 "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 [ftc.gov](https://www.ftc.gov) for recommended resources about technology updates. Use the Federal Communications Commission's Small Biz Cyber planner at [fcc.gov/cyberplanner](https://www.fcc.gov/cyberplanner) to create a custom cyber security plan for your company.