

Job Applications and Personal Identity Safety

As part of your job search you'll send hundreds of resumes to prospective employers, post resumes at online web sites, and complete several job applications. It's an exciting time, but be careful. There are identity thieves waiting to take advantage of your zeal to find a new career.

Be cautious about providing your bank account number, social security number, date of birth, gender, race, and any sensitive personal information. You'll eventually have to give your social security number to an employer, but wait until the deal is sealed and you're comfortable with the legitimacy of the employer.

There are scams where thieves post fake job ads. They contact you with a lucrative job offer but they need to conduct a background check first. Of course, they ask you to provide sensitive identification data. You want the job so you're tempted. Pay attention to the red flag that should have flashed before your eyes.

You can expect that some employers will want to conduct background checks. They will require sensitive information like your date of birth and SSN. Don't consider it unless you're convinced the company is legitimate and you're genuinely interested in working there.

Some employers will want to check your credit reports as part of their background checks. They have to get your written permission. You should get copies of your credit reports before you start job hunting to ensure accuracy.

Keep these ideas in mind when searching for a job.

- Be wary of a job that's too easy to get and has simple requirements.
- Don't give personal information over the phone or on your resume. Wait until you fill out an application during your interview and you've had an opportunity to research the company's legitimacy.
- Don't pay money to get a job. Recruiters and staffing agencies normally charge employers to find you.
- Don't pay money for work-at-home scams.
- Report suspicious employment activities to the Better Business Bureau.

Here are a few other informative resources for job seekers.

- Background check guide www.privacyrights.org/fs/fs16-bck.htm
- Online job search privacy issues www.privacyrights.org/fs/fs25-JobSeekerPriv.htm
- Posting your resume online www.worldprivacyforum.org/resumedatabaseprivacytips.html
- Avoiding scams www.worldprivacyforum.org/jobscamtipsforwarding.html
- Guide for rating online job sites www.worldprivacyforum.org/jobguide.html