West Virginia Executive Branch
Privacy Tip

Summertime Tips



Summer is here! At the State Privacy Office, we realize that you have concerns about your privacy while traveling, just like you do at work. We would like to share a few tips to help protect your privacy while you're vacationing.

1. **Clean out your wallet and purse.** Conduct a thorough clean-up of your wallet. Remove any unnecessary credit cards, your Social Security card, and other unneeded documents that could compromise your identity if lost or stolen.

2. **Hold your mail and newspaper.** Ask your Post Office or a trusted neighbor to hold your mail for you. Mail left in an unlocked mailbox is a goldmine for identity thieves. Mail and newspaper pile-up also sends a signal to potential burglars that your house is vacant.

3. **Connect to the Internet with care.** Be very careful using Wi-Fi networks to go online. Most Wi-Fi hotspots are unsecured and unencrypted, so you will need to take additional steps to protect your privacy. If you are using cyber-cafés, hotel business centers, or other public access Internet facilities, be aware that "keyloggers" (software that can track your keystrokes) may be tracking you. Public access facilities may use servers that aren't encrypted. Therefore, you should avoid accessing any sensitive information from a public computer.

4. **Use the hotel room safe.** Do not leave your wallet or any documents containing personal information in your hotel room unattended. Considering how many people have access, hotel rooms can be relatively unsecure.

Taking a few precautions before you travel and while you're on the road can help you avoid an unpleasant incident that could ruin your vacation.

Picture courtesy of Sue Haga.

Note: Your agency/bureau/department/division may have specific requirements – always check your policies and procedures. If you have questions, contact your Privacy Officer.