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Servicemembers: Protecting your credit when you're away from home

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If you're a servicemember you know you're part of a special group – those who have answered the call to serve our country. You also know that being in the military may mean long periods of time away from home – and your finances. Being away and mission-focused means you won't be able to regularly check your accounts or credit report, so you may be at increased risk for fraud or identity theft.

Today, we're releasing our [Fraud Alert Fact Sheet](#), which provides you with the information you need to know about getting protective alerts inserted into your credit reports when you're away.

Few servicemembers sign up for protective alerts

Since October 2012, over 650 active-duty servicemembers have submitted complaints to the CFPB about their credit reports, and one in six of those complaints involved reports of [identity theft](#) or account misuse. However, out of those over 650 complaints, less than one percent reported putting an Active Duty Alert in place before leaving for active duty.

Sign up for a free Active Duty alert

Having an Active Duty alert on your credit file will notify companies of your military status and ensure that they take reasonable steps to verify the identity of a person who is requesting new credit in your name. The alert will also generally prohibit credit reporting agencies from providing your name for new prescreened credit offers for two years.

In addition to the Active Duty Alert, federal law also permits you to have notices added to your credit files if you believe you are (or might become) a victim of [credit reporting fraud](#) or [identity theft](#). And setting up any of these alerts doesn't cost you a cent!

Security Freeze option available too

Another choice is a Security Freeze, a protection that varies from state-to-state and tends to come with a small fee. But it completely blocks the release of your credit file to new lenders, giving you increased protection and increased peace of mind that no one can borrow in your name while the Security Freeze is active.

All of these are valuable tools and I encourage you to think about using one of them when duty takes you to distant places. Take a look at our [Fraud Alert Fact Sheet](#) so you can learn about all your options and choose the protection that will work best for you when you're away from home.

You can [follow these tips to keep an eye out for identity theft](#). If you have a problem with a consumer financial issue or know a servicemember, veteran or military spouse who does, [a complaint can be submitted online](#). If you just want to share your experience, [tell us your story](#). We're here to help.