

Consumers in Colorado may elect to place a security freeze on their credit file/consumer report. The security freeze is designed to prevent a credit-reporting agency from releasing your credit information without your consent, except when exempted by law. An unknown third party will not be able to obtain credit, loans, and services approved in your name without your knowledge, thus helping to prevent identity theft.

This option may be very beneficial to people who do not anticipate applying for credit in the near future, or at all. If a consumer wishes their consumer report to be accessed by a specific entity, they can contact the credit reporting agency, request that the freeze be temporarily lifted (usually requires a fee) and provide identifying information as required by the credit reporting agency, including a personal identification number or password issued to the consumer.

All consumers should be aware that using a security freeze to control access to personal and financial information in a credit report may delay, interfere with or prohibit acquiring the timely approval of any request or application made that involves access to a credit report. This may include new loans, credit, mortgages, insurance, rental housing, government services, utilities, employment or other services including instant credit at a point of sale.



**OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY**
TWENTIETH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

STANLEY L. GARNETT, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

How to “Freeze” Your Credit Files

Consumers in Colorado may elect to place a security freeze on their credit file/consumer report.



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▶ How can I request a security freeze?

To request a freeze on your credit report, you must write to each of the three credit reporting agencies. You must provide identifying information. If you are an identity theft victim, provide a copy of your police report. A credit-reporting agency must place a security freeze on your consumer report no later than five (5) business days after receiving the written request. According to Colorado law, the credit-reporting agency may not charge a fee for the first request.

▶ Write to the following addresses:

EQUIFAX

Equifax Security Freeze
P.O. Box 105788
Atlanta, GA 30348

- Send by certified mail
- Include full name, with middle initial and Jr./Sr., etc.
- Social Security number and date of birth
- Include current address and proof of current address such as a current utility bill
- www.equifax.com

experian

Experian Security Freeze
P.O. Box 9554
Allen, TX 75013

- Send by certified mail
- Include full name, with middle initial and Jr./Sr., etc.
- Social Security number and date of birth
- Include current address and previous home addresses for the past two years
- One copy of a government issued identification card (driver's license, state ID, military ID card, etc.
- One copy of a recent utility bill, bank or insurance statement that displays your name and current address and date of issue
- www.experian.com

TransUnion.

TransUnion Security Freeze
P.O. Box 6790
Fullerton, CA 92834-6790

- Send by regular or certified mail
- Include full name, with middle initial and Jr./Sr., etc.
- Social Security number and date of birth
- Current home address and addresses for past five years
- www.transunion.com

▶ Do I have to freeze my file with all three credit-reporting agencies?

Yes. Different credit issuers may use different credit reporting agencies. If you want to stop your credit file from being viewed, you need to freeze it with Equifax, Experian and TransUnion.

▶ How long does it take for a security freeze to take effect?

Credit reporting agencies must place the freeze no later than five (5) business days after receiving your written request.

▶ Are there fees associated with placing and/or lifting a Security Freeze?

As a resident of Colorado, there is no fee for placing the initial security freeze. There is a fee if you want to lift the freeze temporarily while you apply for a new credit account. If you lift the security freeze for one specific business entity, the charge cannot exceed \$12. If the lift is for a certain period of time (3 to 30 days), it will cost you no more than \$10 for each request.

▶ If my files are frozen, can I apply for a new credit account?

Yes. If you want to open a new credit account or obtain a new loan, you can temporarily lift the freeze in order to apply for credit or for any other transaction that requires that a third party have access to your personal credit history. You can lift it for a certain period of time to allow a third party (with your permission) to receive your credit report. Or you can lift it for a specific creditor for 3 to 30 days. After you send your letter requesting the freeze, each of the credit bureaus will send you a confirmation notice and a "Personal Identification Number" (PIN). You will also get instructions on how to lift the freeze. You can lift the freeze by phone, using your PIN. The credit reporting agencies must lift your freeze within three (3) business days after receiving your request.

▶ How long does a security freeze last?

A security freeze will remain in place until you request in writing that it be removed.

▶ Can a creditor see my files if they are frozen?

No. The only thing a creditor would see is a message or a code indicating that the files have been frozen. Your report can still be released to your existing creditors or to other entities exempt by state statute.

▶ What are the security freeze exemptions?

According to state laws, there are situations and organizations that are exempt from the security freeze. Your credit report may be released to companies that have a current financial relationship with you, state or local law enforcement, the courts, child support agencies, governmental agencies investigating fraud, the Department of Revenue, insurance agencies processing a claim, private collection agency acting on a court order, the consumer's pension plan entity, and most entities with whom the consumer may have a financial obligation or debt.

▶ Can I order my own credit report while my file is frozen?

Yes. The federal "Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act of 2003" (FACT Act) will allow you to get one free credit report annually. As a resident of Colorado, you are entitled to receive one free credit report annually from each credit-reporting agency. We recommend obtaining one credit report from each agency every four months.

▶ Can an employer do a background check on me if I have a freeze on my credit file?

No. You would have to lift the freeze to allow a background check.

▶ If I freeze my file will that stop those pre-approved credit offers?

Most of the credit offers are made with information obtained through the credit-reporting agencies, so freezing your credit files should stop most of them. You can also call 888-5OPTOUT (888-567-8688) or online at www.optoutprescreen.com. It's good for five years or you can make it permanent.

▶ Will my request for a credit freeze also freeze my spouse's file?

No. You and your spouse have separate credit files. The credit-reporting companies maintain credit files on individuals only. They do not maintain joint files for spouses. Both spouses have to freeze their separate credit files, via separate letters requesting the freeze, in order to get the benefit.

▶ What is the Colorado Statute regarding the security freeze?

The law on security freeze is Colorado Revised Statute 12-14.3-106 which became effective July 1, 2006.