

Credit Report Security Freezes: Requesting, Lifting, and Removing Them

Both Massachusetts and federal law allow consumers to place a security freeze on their credit reports. A security freeze prohibits a credit reporting agency from releasing any information from a consumer's credit report without written authorization. However, please be aware that placing a security freeze on your credit report may delay, interfere with, or prevent the timely approval of any requests you make for new loans, credit mortgages, employment, housing or other services. Credit reporting agencies are not permitted to charge you to place, temporarily lift, or permanently remove a security freeze.

To place a security freeze on your credit report, you must send a written request to each of the three major consumer reporting agencies: Equifax (www.equifax.com); Experian (www.experian.com); and TransUnion (www.transunion.com) by regular, certified or overnight mail at the addresses below:

Equifax Security Freeze P.O. Box 105788 Atlanta, GA 30348	Experian Security Freeze P.O. Box 9554 Allen, TX 75013	Trans Union Security Freeze Fraud Victim Assistance Department P.O. Box 2000 Chester, PA 19022-2000
---	--	--

In order to request a security freeze, you will need to provide the following information:

1. Your full name (including middle initial as well as Jr., Sr., II, III, etc.);
1. Social Security Number;
2. Date of birth;
3. The address[es] where you have lived over the prior five years;
4. Proof of current address such as a current utility bill or telephone bill;
5. A legible photocopy of a government issued identification card (state driver's license or ID card, military identification, etc.)
6. Social Security card, pay stub, or W2
7. If you are a victim of identity theft, include a copy of either the police report, investigative report, or complaint to a law enforcement agency concerning identity theft;

The credit reporting agencies have three (3) business days after receiving your request to place a security freeze on your credit report. The credit bureaus must also send written confirmation to you within five (5) business days and provide you with a unique personal identification number (PIN) or password, or both that can be used by you to authorize the removal or lifting of the security freeze.

To lift the security freeze in order to allow a specific entity or individual access to your credit report, you must call or send a written request to the credit reporting agencies by mail and include proper identification (name, address, and social security number) and the PIN number or password provided to you when you placed the security freeze as well as the identities of those entities or individuals you would like to receive your credit report or the specific period of time you want the credit report available. The credit reporting agencies have three (3) business days after receiving your request to lift the security freeze for those identified entities or for the specified period of time.

To remove the security freeze, you must send a written request to each of the three credit bureaus by mail and include proper identification (name, address, and social security number) and the PIN number or password provided to you when you placed the security freeze. The credit bureaus have three (3) business days after receiving your request to remove the security freeze.