



CITY OF COSTA MESA

CALIFORNIA 92628-1200

P. O. BOX 1200

FROM THE POLICE DEPARTMENT

June 3, 2004

Frederick P. Horn
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
County of Orange
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

RE: Response to Grand Jury Identity Theft Findings

Dear Judge Horn:

The Orange County Grand Jury produced a report entitled "Identity Theft: What are Local Law Enforcement and Prosecutors Doing to Combat the Problem?" In the report, the Costa Mesa Police Department was specifically requested, pursuant to Penal Code 933.05 (f), to respond to three listed findings (findings 3-5). Below are the findings and our recommended responses to those findings for your review and comments.

FINDING

- 3. "The Orange County District Attorney, the Orange County Sheriff-Coroner Department and the city police departments in Orange County take steps to form and actively participate in a countywide Regional Identity Theft Task Force comprised of representatives of each of these agencies. The task force should seek the cooperation and participation of the United States Postal Inspector, the United States Secret Service, the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service and the United States Federal Trade Commission."*

RESPONSE

Currently, our Department has two investigators that investigate all identity theft related crimes reported to our jurisdiction. Once the investigator determines a crime has been committed, resources from the federal government (including the United States Postal Inspector, Secret Service, Immigration and Naturalization Service and Federal Trade Commission) are already available to provide local assistance or assume jurisdiction for the investigation.

There is no need to form a task force to investigate identity theft, as sufficient resources exist between law enforcement agencies informally. In addition, there is a formal Orange County Financial Crimes Investigators Association (OCFCIA) that meets ten times a year. Members of that association include representatives from all twenty-one Orange County municipal law enforcement agencies, other state and federal law enforcement agencies, private sector entities, including but not limited to, banks, credit card companies and the credit bureaus. The OCFCIA supplies a written membership directory to all members, facilitates networking between members at their monthly meetings, supports the opportunity to discuss pending investigations and crime trends, and provides monthly training.

Another reason that we believe a task force is not in the best interest of our Department is that our existing resources assigned to investigate identity thefts at the Costa Mesa Police Department can be used for other investigations as needed. Typically, individuals assigned to a task force are limited to task force activities and unavailable for other investigative Department needs.

FINDING

4. *"Orange County city police departments and the Orange County Sheriff-Coroner Department work cooperatively to develop standardized public information materials, possibly modeled after excellent pamphlets that now exist, for use by all departments."*

RESPONSE

The Costa Mesa Police Department has developed and made available to the public a printed brochure with public information materials related to identity theft crimes. Our brochure includes specific information and instruction as to what to do in the event someone becomes a victim of identity theft, and includes steps individuals can take to help minimize their exposure to identity theft.

Although a generic brochure developed on a countywide basis may have some benefits, we believe that our public information exceeds the requirements advocated by the Grand Jury.

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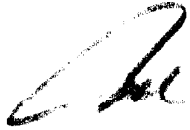
FINDING

5. *"Orange County city police departments and the Orange County Sheriff-Coroner Department adopt a standardized identity-theft crime-reporting form, possibly modeled after forms now in use by several police departments."*

RESPONSE

The Costa Mesa Police Department developed a specific identity theft crime report form and believes it meets the necessary requirements for reporting that type of crime. Our form can be made available to other Orange County agencies that may not have a specific identity theft crime report form.

Respectfully Submitted,



JOHN D. HENSLEY
Chief Of Police

JDH/lg

Attachments

cc: Gary Monahan, Mayor, Costa Mesa
Allan Roeder, City Manager, Costa Mesa
City Council, Costa Mesa

**City of Costa Mesa
Police Department**

**Brochure with Website information is available to view at the
Orange County Public Law Library
515 North Flower
Santa Ana, CA 92703
(Building 32, Civic Center Plaza)**