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The November 27 to December 15, 2013 data breach of 40 million Target customers' credit and debit card information is not too far behind us. Fortunately consumers are not liable for fraudulent charges as a result of security breaches. Unfortunately some of these data breaches sweep up more than just credit and debit card information: it is possible that combining the booty from different data breaches, e.g. Target's 40 million and Sony Playstation's 77 million (where names and addresses were stolen with the possibility of credit card information also being taken), could result in enough personal identifiable information about a person to attempt or succeed in identity theft. Furthermore, the Target data breach is reported to have included tens of millions of more people and their personal identifiable information even without credit and debit card information.

Identity theft is taking new forms as reported by the Associated Press in October 2013 as thieves are posing as truckers to steal loads of cargo. In the good old days, cargo thieves would just steal a truck from a parking lot, nice and easy. Unfortunately the use of technology (e.g. global position systems and advanced locks) have been so successful in thwarting criminals that the crooks had to devise new methods of thievery, so they turned to identity theft.

Thanks to the vast amount of information in the Internet, thieves can learn the identities of the specific freight haulers of specific commodity items, enabling the fraudsters to target specific goods such as steaks, crabs, cheese, or walnuts for example.

According to the article, the scheme requires the purloiners to reactivate a dormant carrier number from the Department of Transportation for as little as \$300. Then – and again thanks to the Internet – the tricksters will research the trucking companies and forge their identities as well as the pertinent documentation such as the pickup authorization paperwork, insurance policies, and driver's licenses.

The fraudsters offer low bids (I believe to secure business quickly) to freight brokers who handle shipping for various companies. Because the illegitimate trucking company is represented by a legitimate broker, the end-customer (the company who would like their commodity shipped) has little reason to be suspicious. Unfortunately the customer's goods are never delivered to their destination because they are stolen by the imposter trucking company.

Depending on the commodity, the losses can be valued anywhere from nearly \$100,000 to almost \$500,000 per truckload. (The truck trailer was not included in the cost of the theft: the trucking company would have to provide its own truck and trailer.)

While a shipment of food items may be an isolated incident, a stolen shipment of pharmaceuticals would be a critical issue and could result in a global recall of every pharmaceutical manufactured from a lot/batch identifier matching those in the heist to ensure no tampered or counterfeit product ends up in the market.

The lesson for both individuals and companies alike is that identity theft is serious business and you have to be very certain of who the other person – or business – is that you are entering into a relationship with before trusting them with your valuables.

Thanks.

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Look for the book --> <http://www.gowerpublishing.com/isbn/9781409407324>



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