

**FROM THE OFFICE OF WELD COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
KENNETH R. BUCK**



Fraud Alert!

YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER: WHO CAN REQUIRE IT AND WHO CAN'T



When the Social Security Act was signed into law in 1935, the intent of the Social Security Number was never to be an all-purpose personal identifying number. Throughout the years, however, because each number is unique, it became a seemingly simple way to distinguish one person from another on all types of forms from loan applications to student id numbers and driver's license numbers.

Today, because of fraud, we now know how crucial it is to keep our Social Security Numbers safe and private. But who can still ask you for your Social Security Number or, perhaps a better question is, who can you rightfully decline to give your Social Security Number to?

Who Can Require My Social Security Number:

- Government tax and welfare agencies, including the IRS, and other federal agencies (for health benefits and other entitlements)
- State and local tax or revenue agencies
- State professional, occupational and recreational licensing agencies
- Other governmental agencies, but under federal law they must tell you why your SSN is needed, whether providing it is mandatory or voluntary and how it will be used
- Banks and securities brokerages
- State motor vehicle departments (however they cannot record your SSN on a driver's license or state identification card)
- Employer for wage and tax purposes only (not from a job applicant)

Other requests:

Federal law does not prohibit a merchant or other business from requesting your SSN. However, there is no state or federal law that requires you to provide your SSN to any entity not authorized by law to require it. Retail stores, prospective landlords, prospective employers, utility companies and other service providers can ask for your SSN, but you are not required to provide it to them. They can, however, deny services to you if you refuse to provide it. Ask why they need your SSN, how they will use the information and whether or not they will share your SSN with other parties. Also, ask if there is an alternative form of identification they will accept in place of your SSN. Be proactive about protecting your number!

Some of the information for this fraud alert was obtained from the Colorado Attorney General's web site at www.ago.state.co.us

Contact your local police agency if you think you are a victim of a crime. To contact the Weld County District Attorney's Office, call (970) 356-4010 ext. 4702.