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Identity theft deterrent thought starters

Some pencil-necked, pointy-headed techno-geek decided it would be cute to plant a worm or virus or something in my e-mail and I've spent an inordinate amount of time over the last week and a half eradicating the thing. Thank goodness I use virus scans and spyware software and my outgoing mail server refuses to work if it detects a virus.

Now I know how victims of identity theft must feel when some idiot creates havoc in their lives. I might be serving time if I could find this sumbitch.

Latest reports indicate that a quarter of Americans have been a victim of identity theft in some form or fashion. The Feds are taking note. They have passed regulations to help protect consumer's personal, non-public information in the form of the Privacy Rule, the Safeguards Rule and the soon to be upon us Red Flags Rule.

As a dealership, you might as well get prepared.

Here are some processes you can implement today that will get you started down the path of compliance with the Red Flag Rule.

Beware of consumers who:

1. Have an expired or pre-dated driver's license
2. Doesn't know or gives conflicting answers about personal demographic information
3. Insists on conducting the transaction over the phone, fax or e-mail
4. Has someone waiting for her outside in another vehicle and seems overly anxious to complete the transaction
5. Pays MSRP and buys everything in aftermarket and F&I
6. Has placed a consumer statement in his/her Credit Bureau Report stating that his/her identity or identifying information has been stolen, and requires the inquirer to positively confirm the applicant's information

You may also want to consider two additional steps some dealers have taken to help stem the tide of identify theft: video recording F&I transactions and obtaining customer's thumb prints.

These dealers report that some consumers leave the F&I offices as soon as they understand the transaction is being recorded or the F&I Manager asks for the thumbprint. The inference is the consumer was probably an identity thief and the dealership just thwarted another attempt.

Get them sumbitches.

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