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THE LOBBY

IDENTITY THEFT

Paper Documents Pose Risks

The latest statistics on paper data breaches suggest that more needs to be done to prevent documents with personal identifying information from falling into the wrong hands. The Identity Theft Resource Center reported 99 paper breaches as of Sept. 30, which represented more than 25 percent of total reported breaches (paper and electronic). The business community accounted for 35 of the 99 public paper breaches reported.

Instances of paper breaches include boxes of files with financial, tax, or Social Security information left in dumpsters, unlocked storage units or abandoned buildings; unshredded PII documents left in an unsecured public location; and information containing PII mailed to the wrong person or displayed on an envelope. Because such information is "ready to use" and may contain signatures, it is often easier for identity thieves to exploit.

