

Staying Safe and Sound on Social Media

These days, many of us live and breathe social media. Whether you start your day by checking your Facebook feed or spend evenings finding new recipes and decorating ideas on Pinterest, social media can be a great way to connect. However, fraud and identity theft are running rampant and it's important to make sure your personal information is protected.

1. Privacy Settings

First and foremost, check out your privacy settings. Most sites make it easy to limit your exposure so you only share information with friends. Select your privacy settings accordingly so the information you post is only being seen by the people you want to see it. Be aware, some of these sites change their policies without notice. Make sure to check your settings regularly so they reflect what you want to share.

2. Password and Security Questions

Cyber thieves are professionals at hacking into your online accounts; so the last thing you want to do is make it easier for them. Remember your online banking password and security questions? Well, don't make the answers to those questions something that a cyber thief can figure out by simply visiting your Facebook profile page. For example, stay away from your birthday, maiden name, where you went to college or the name of the company you work at. Make your password and security questions something only you would know.

3. Location Information

Sometimes it's hard to resist posting your upcoming vacation plans, but think twice next time. You make it very easy for thieves to track where you are and when. If they notice you will be away from your house for a long period of time, it might give them the opportunity to break in. If you really want to show off your vacation, post a few nice pictures once you've returned.

4. Only Post What's Flattering

Whether you are a student or someone a little older, be careful what you post. Incriminating status posts or unflattering photos (and I don't mean just pictures taken of your bad side) can get in your way of being hired for a potential job. Before you post ask yourself, "would I want to show this to my grandma?" If the answer is no, you may want to think twice about posting.

Hopefully these tips help you feel more comfortable and safe in the social media environment. Facebook and other outlets are a great way to share and stay connected with your friends. You just need to stay in control of what you are putting out there.

If you have any questions, call Align at **800-942-9575**.