



Dear Clients and Friends,

As you all know, Heritage Advisors was founded on a commitment to fully service a client's financial needs. In the wake of the news that Equifax suffered a security breach, our firm would like to ensure we are upholding our commitment by providing guidance to our clients.

#### History of the Breach

On September 7th, Equifax announced it had suffered a breach in its security in mid-May, which continued until it was discovered on July 29th. The breach exposed the personal information (name, Social Security number, birth date, address(es), and driver's license) of approximately 143 million U.S. consumers and the credit card numbers of 209,000 U.S. consumers.

#### Impact of the Breach

The criminals responsible for the breach will likely sell the information and/or attempt to use the information to gain access to existing accounts or to open new accounts. Unfortunately, the threat of unauthorized access and/or opening of new accounts will likely exist indefinitely.

#### Next Steps:

As a practical next step, we advise you utilize the following link to determine whether you are impacted: <https://www.equifaxsecurity2017.com/potential-impact/>. If you are among the consumers impacted by the security breach, we advise you take the following action:

1. Check your accounts for unauthorized activity.
2. Consider placing either (i) a freeze on your credit files with Experian, Equifax, and Transunion or (ii) a fraud alert on your credit files.
  - a. The freeze will stop new accounts from being opened by prohibiting the credit reporting agencies from releasing your credit file. Without the credit file, a creditor cannot determine the credit worthiness of an individual and is then unwilling to open a new account. The freeze may be thawed and refrozen if a new account is desired using a PIN provided by the agencies when you freeze each account, but a nominal fee of up to \$10.00 may be assessed.
  - b. The fraud alert will curtail suspicious new accounts from being opened by requiring the credit reporting agencies to take reasonable steps to verify an individual's identity. Understandably, if an individual is unable to verify his or her identity, the credit report will not be provided and, as mentioned in 2(a), the creditor will be unable to assess the credit worthiness of the individual, causing the creditor to be unwilling to open a new account. An initial fraud alert will last 90 days, is free, and may be renewed for subsequent 90 day periods (a 7 year fraud alert may be available if you are a victim of fraud or identity theft).
3. Check your credit report. You are entitled to a free credit report each year from the three credit reporting agencies.

We understand the enormity of this breach and desire to assist you in protecting your assets. If you have questions or desire our firm help you freeze your account, please call or email us at 602.802.8220 and [khealey@nelsonhealey.com](mailto:khealey@nelsonhealey.com).

Sincerely,

Keegan M. Healey, JD