



# MILITARY CONSUMER PROTECTION

## ★ GUARD YOUR IDENTITY AND KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Securing your financial future goes way beyond having a budget. It also includes being proactive by protecting your identity and knowing your rights as a member of the military under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) and Military Lending Act (MLA). See your legal office for more information.

### ★ IDENTITY THEFT

Identity theft occurs when someone steals an individual's personal information and uses it without his or her permission to open fraudulent accounts and make unauthorized purchases. Identity theft is a serious problem that can ruin a person's credit and good name and can take significant time, effort, and money to resolve. In 2018, the Federal Trade Commission received over 444,000 reports of identity theft.

#### WARNING SIGNS OF IDENTITY THEFT:

Missing bills; unauthorized accounts on credit reports; unsolicited credit cards or bills; credit denial

#### WAYS TO DEFEND AGAINST IDENTIFY THEFT:

Safeguard mail, wallet, purse, receipts, accounts/statements; shred documents instead of throwing them away; notify creditors of updates to address; check credit reports regularly at [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com); place active-duty alerts or security freezes on credit reports prior to deployment.

- For more information, contact the National Consumer Credit Reporting Agencies: TransUnion **1-800-680-7289**, Experian **1-888-397-3742**, Equifax **1-800-525-6285**, Federal Trade Commission (FTC) **1-877-ID-Theft** or [www.consumer.gov](http://www.consumer.gov), or Military Consumer (MC) managed by the FTC [www.militaryconsumer.gov](http://www.militaryconsumer.gov)



### ★ SERVICEMEMBERS' CIVIL RELIEF ACT

In 2003, the Soldiers and Sailors Civil Relief Act was rewritten and renamed the Servicemembers' Civil Relief Act (SCRA). The law spells out protections for members of the U.S. military.

#### WHO'S PROTECTED:

Active-duty Sailors, Reservists, and members of the National Guard (when on active federal service) are protected under the law. SCRA (for all) begins on the first day of active duty, which means when the person leaves home for basic or occupational training.

#### LEGAL PROTECTIONS:

When certain requirements are met, the protections include: termination of cell phone contracts; automobile leases; termination of rental leases; evictions from housing; relief from foreclosures; installment contract protection; 6% interest rate cap on debts before active duty; stay of court proceedings; relief from enforcement of obligations, liabilities, and taxes.

- For more information about the SCRA visit [www.militaryonesource.mil](http://www.militaryonesource.mil) and search the keyword "SCRA."

### ★ MILITARY LENDING ACT

Under the Military Lending Act (MLA), active duty Sailors (including Reserves and covered dependents), cannot be charged an interest rate higher than 36% on most consumer loans, along with some other protections.

- For more information about the MLA visit [www.consumerfinance.gov](http://www.consumerfinance.gov).