

NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY

Joint Forces Staff College



International Student Management Office

Fellows Handbook

(Revised April 2023 - Norfolk Edition)

Dear Fellows:

We will soon welcome you to Norfolk, Virginia. This wonderful city located adjacent to the Chesapeake Bay is the metropolitan core of Southern Virginia and home to several critical military facilities. During your stay here you will have opportunities to experience American politics, history, science, sports, art, and more.

This handbook is designed to ease your transition into your NDU educational program by providing important information about the area and basic living needs. Almost any question you may have about NDU that is not covered by the handbook can be found in the pre-arrival booklet, at [National Defense University \(ndu.edu\)](http://NationalDefenseUniversity.ndu.edu) and information specifically about ISMO can be accessed at [Home \(ndu.edu\)](http://Home.ndu.edu). ISMO staff also will be happy to assist with any questions you may have.

Additionally, we encourage you to explore Norfolk for yourself. Nonetheless, the most rewarding source of information about the Norfolk area and about America in general is the population that surrounds you. Get to know your fellow students, community sponsors, and neighbors, make acquaintances, and share experiences. They can provide valuable suggestions on how to make the most of your stay in the United States.

We hope that you will leave America with an appreciation for its tremendous strengths and an understanding of its shortcomings. We are confident that your experience will be a great one and excited to assist you to make that happen.

Sincerely,

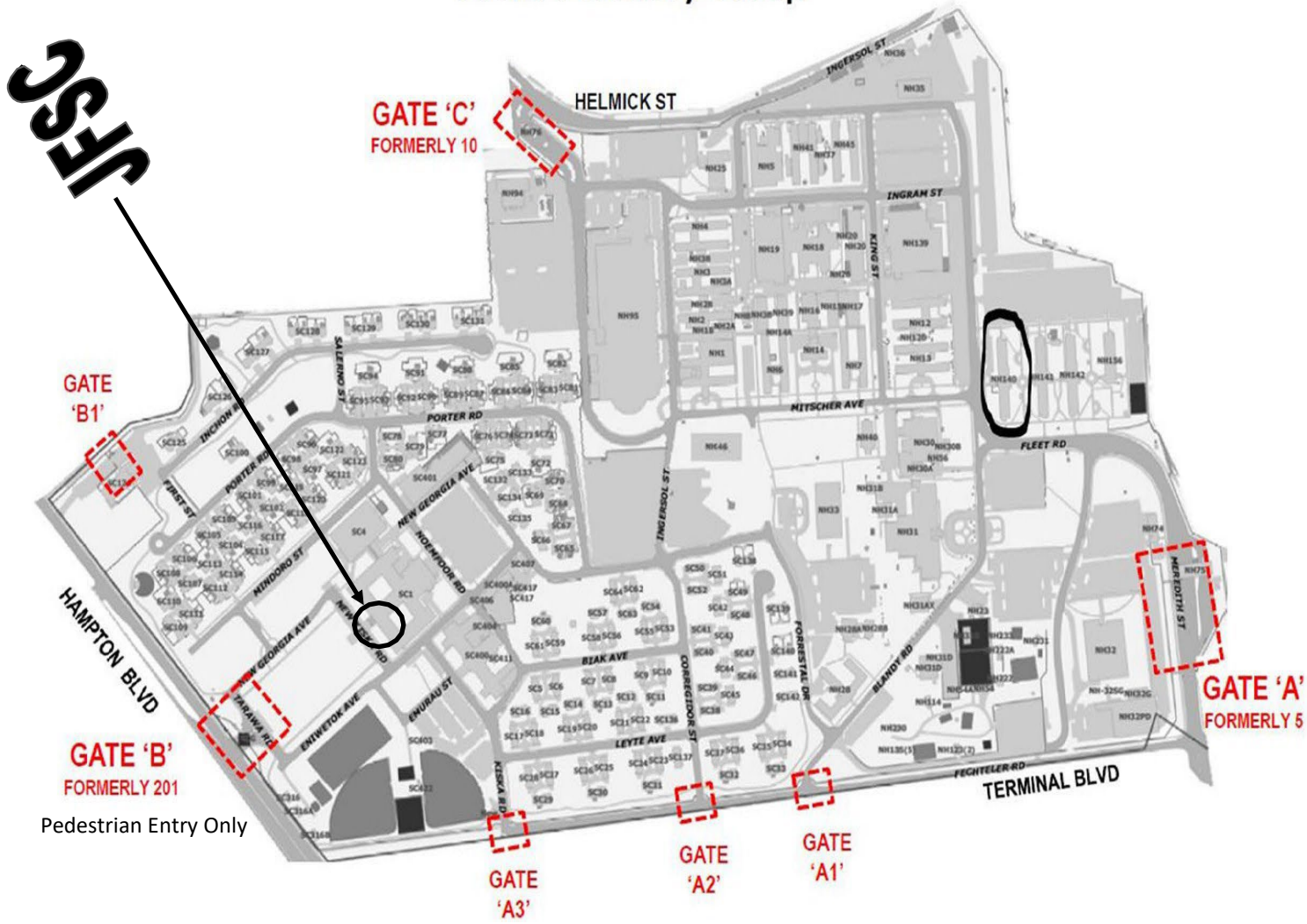
ISMO



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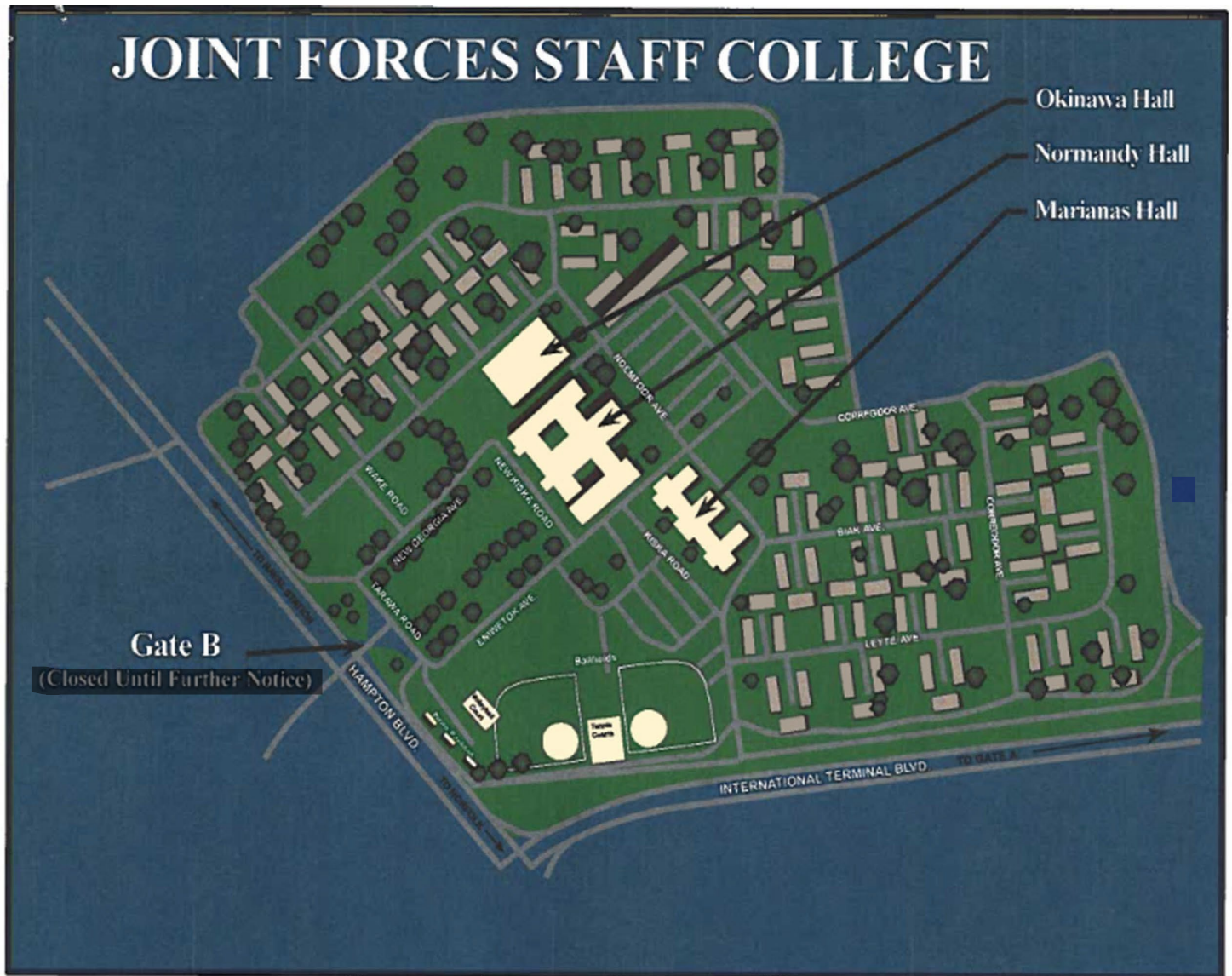
NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY HAMPTON ROADS (NSA HR) BASE

NSA Facility Map



ONLY GATES A, B, C ARE OPEN FOR USE

JOINT FORCES STAFF COLLEGE CAMPUS MAP



NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

The city of Norfolk is a city on the water, and is a hub of diverse culture, ideas, and people. The city is strategically located in the southeastern Hampton Roads region, right next to one of the fastest growing ports in the United States. It is also located near other key metropolitan areas of Southern Virginia, such as Virginia Beach and Newport News.

Norfolk has an estimated population of just over 230,000 people. The city is comprised of historic neighborhoods and towns that have long ties to the infamous Chesapeake Bay; however, the city has undergone some revitalization and with that came modern new neighborhoods such as Downtown, Ghent, and Fairmount Park.

BACKGROUND ON THE AREA

Norfolk is flanked by several major cities and ports— the entire area is often referred to as Hampton Roads. These cities are known as Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach. The area itself is known for its large military presence with one of the world's largest populations of military personnel, over 150,000 active duty and civilian personnel. This is due to being home to the largest naval base in the world, Naval Station Norfolk, and the only NATO command on U.S. soil.

Furthermore, the area is home to many historical sites and attractions due the lengthy history of settlement within the region. The Hampton Roads harbor was a source of life for the settlers who came to its shores and continues to be a vital key to the growth and prosperity for the 7 Cities area. These cities intersect to create an area rich with diversity and possibility, and offers plenty of opportunities for one to explore their interests in education, entertainment, business, and more.

Norfolk Visitor Center: www.visitnorfolk.com

IDENTIFICATION CARDS

INVITATIONAL TRAVEL ORDER (ITO)

Your Invitational Travel Order (ITO) establishes your sponsorship and invitation to participate in training in the United States. It is the controlling document used to authorize training terms, conditions, and privileges. Please retain the original copy and have several photocopies available to use. Keep a copy on hand during your travels as well as copies in your checked baggage.

Dependents accompanying or joining you must be authorized in Item 12 of your ITO to be eligible for privileges such as Military ID cards, access to use the Exchange, Commissary, and any medical services where appropriate. Only ITO-authorized dependents are eligible for military ID cards.

US MILITARY ID CARD

The most important form of identification is a US Military ID (USID) card. You will receive your USID card during the first week of in-processing. **You must carry your USID at all times.** This card will allow you access to authorized bases and military facilities, such as clinics, exchanges, and commissaries. Only dependents listed on your ITO over the age of 14 are eligible to receive dependent ID cards. You must surrender your and all dependent USID cards.

A Foreign Identification Number (FIN) will be generated during USID card processing. Please remember your FIN as it is used for many administrative purposes and is the equivalent of a Social Security Number for foreign nationals.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER (SSN) & FOREIGN IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (FIN)

Social Security numbers are used to report an individual's wages to the U.S. government and to determine a person's eligibility for Social Security benefits. **International Fellows and dependents do not have permission to work in the United States; therefore, they are not eligible to apply for an SSN.** International Fellows do not need an SSN to apply for federal, state, or local public benefits because International Fellows are generally ineligible for such benefits.

You cannot get an SSN for the sole purpose of obtaining a driver's license and do not need an SSN to conduct business with a bank or register your children for school. As a foreign national, your FIN is equivalent to a Social Security Number and may be used as such when an SSN is required.

TRANSPORTATION

BIKING

Bicycles can be placed at the front of the bus. There are many bike racks located throughout the city. There are also bikes available to rent within the city. Be sure to lock your bike up, exercise caution, and obey the rules of the road when traveling by bike. Wearing a helmet is required on the base.

RIDE SHARE APPS

Ride-sharing apps are a convenient way to get around. Simply download a ride-sharing apps (either Uber or Lyft) and set up an account connecting Paypal or a credit card. On-demand service means no reservations required and no waiting in taxi lines. You can compare rates for different vehicles and get fare quotes in the app. You will be emailed a receipt when you arrive at your destination.

DRIVING IN VIRGINIA

You must have a driver's license to operate a motor vehicle in the United States; each state has their own requirements regarding driver's license. We recommend that every Fellow and family member that intend to drive in the US obtain an International Driver's license in-country before departing for the US. It cannot be obtained in the US. Make sure your Invitational Travel Order (ITO) states that you are authorized to travel by POV. For additional information, see the Virginia DMV website: [Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles](http://www.dmv.virginia.gov)

RENTING A CAR

To rent a car you will need to have a license from your home country, a passport, and a credit card and may also be asked for an International Driver's license and a return flight. The price you will pay for a rental vehicle varies depending on the type and size of the vehicle, pick up and drop off locations, and the length of time you wish to keep the car. Remember to ask for a military discount!

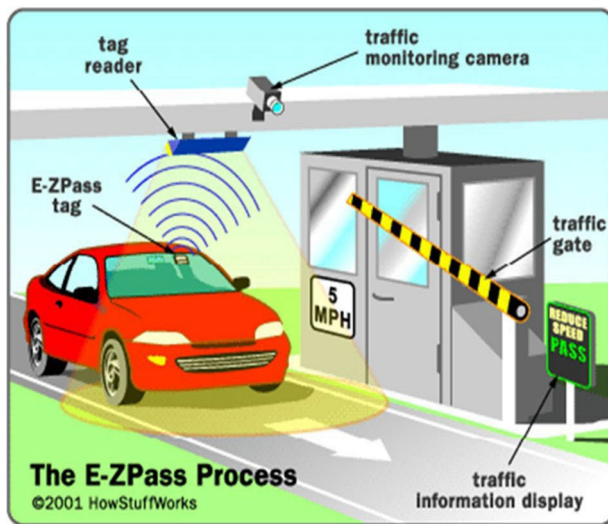
Hertz Rent-a-Car Website: www.hertz.com Phone: 1-800-654-3131	Avis Car Rental Website: www.avis.com Phone: 1-800-230-4898
Budget Car Rental Website: www.budget.com Phone: 1 -800-218-7992	Enterprise Rent-a-Car Website: www.enterprise.com Phone: 1-800-261-7331

HOV – HIGH OCCUPANCY VEHICLE LANE

HOV is a special lane for commuters with more than one person per vehicle (requirement varies depending on location). It is used to promote carpooling. You can usually travel much faster during rush hour times in the HOV lane. If you are caught violating the HOV lane, you may be fined up to \$1,000.

EZPASS – ELECTRONIC TOLL COLLECTION

To create and manage an EZ Pass account: www.ezpassva.com



E-Z Pass is an electronic toll collection (ETC) system that allows you to prepay your tolls, avoiding higher toll fees.

You can purchase a device at these locations:

- *Marine Corps Exchange*
1251 Yalu St.
Norfolk, VA 23515
- *Navy Exchange – JEB Little Creek*
1170 Amphibious Drive Virginia
Beach, VA 23459
- *Navy Exchange - Norfolk*
1560 Mall Drive
Norfolk, VA 23511

COMPUTER

You will **not** be issued a computer to use throughout your program with NDU. National Defense University is a “Bring Your Own Device” (BYOD) environment in which all students, both American and international, are asked to provide their own technology hardware and software. The minimum Computing Requirements for student devices can be found here: [IT Requirements and Guidance \(ndu.edu\)](http://ndu.edu)

BANKING

All IFs will need a U.S. bank account to process their per diem for Field Studies. Do not share your PIN with anyone and do not provide any personal information over the phone. There may be an extra charge if you use an ATM that is not owned by your bank. You may also use ATMs to make deposits into your bank account (cash or checks).

GENERAL INFORMATION

TIPPING

Leaving tips for services is customary in the United States. Waiters and waitresses in most US States, including Virginia, are paid below minimum wages. The amount of tip is usually determined by the type and level of service provided. You are expected to leave a minimum of 15% of the 'pre-tax' amount. When you find a waiter or waitresses service to be exceptional, 20-25% is an appropriate tip. In some instances, the gratuity (or tip) is included in the bill; this occurs most frequently with large groups (5 and more people) and should be posted in the restaurant, referenced on the menu, or you will be informed at the time of reservation or at seating.

Hairdressers, manicurists, masseur/masseuse, and similar service providers ordinarily expect to be tipped approximately 15-20% of the bill. Taxi drivers expect 10-15% of the fare, with 15% more common in larger cities. When valet parking, it is suggested that you tip \$1-5 (the value of the car factors into the amount of tip!) when you drop the car and again when you retrieve it.

Bellmen (luggage carriers) expect \$1-5 per bag (proportionate to the hotel's rating- 1-5 star). Hotel maids and housekeeping staff ordinarily expect a tip of approximately \$2-3 per night in an average hotel, with \$3-5 per night in a luxury hotel or resort. It is suggested that you tip daily rather than at the end of your visit as you may have a different maid each day. Leave your tip in an obvious place such as on or near the television, on your pillow or on the bathroom counter.

LEAVE

Please determine whether you would like to take leave after the end of the course or during winter break. All post-training leave must be authorized on your ITO (based on approval by your home military unit) at least 15 days prior to end of training. If you do not have it on your ITO, you need to submit a letter or memo from your home approving authority to ISMO and we will assist in getting an amendment to your ITO.

ONLINE SHOPPING

The convenience of shopping online and availability of goods offer an attractive alternative to shopping in a traditional store. However, you should ensure that the company or the individual with whom you are dealing is legitimate and has the goods or services as advertised. This is often difficult, but if the deal seems too good to be true, or if you have a sense that something is "not quite right," you are likely correct. You should try to determine whether the company is legitimate by asking such questions as: what kind of business it is, what does it sell, where is it located, how can you contact the business, is the product or service being offered clearly described, restrictions or limitations on the sale, return policy, warranty/guarantee, safe payment options, estimated delivery date, etc.

TELEMARKETING

I keep receiving telemarketer calls and unwanted mail (“Junk Mail”). Is this normal, and how do they know my information? In the United States, it is common, and legal, for companies providing consumer services to ‘sell’ your name and address to other companies, unless you have advised in writing that you do not wish for them to do so (companies are required to send disclosure forms, but your response is only required when you do not wish for them to sell your information. Many of us do not read such pamphlets as they appear to be ‘junk mail’). In addition, companies obtain your name, address, and telephone number from internet searches or from the electronic telephone listings (if your number is published). You can pay a fee to your local telephone carrier to have your number unpublished; however, please be aware that no one will be able to obtain your telephone number through directory assistance (i.e., the telephone operator). Therefore, it is likely that you will receive telephone calls from telemarketers (companies trying to sell goods or services).

Can I do anything to prevent these calls? You can avoid most of such calls by registering your home and mobile telephone numbers on the National Do Not Call Registry at <https://www.donotcall.gov/> or by calling +1 888 382 1222. You can also write to Direct Marketing Association, P.O. Box 9014, Farmingdale, NY 11735. If you have a smartphone, you can also download a (free) application that allows you to block calls and text messages from telemarketing companies.

Can I do anything to prevent these mailings? YES. Any unwanted or junk mail can be reduced by sending a letter to Direct Marketing Association, P.O. Box 9008, Farmingdale, NY 11735, informing them that you do not wish to receive junk mail.

I keep receiving credit card offers. What should I do to prevent this? Many people receive credit card offers in the mail which ordinarily contain a pre-approved application for a new credit card. You can add your name to the list by visiting <http://www.optoutprescreen.com>, or by calling 1 888 OPT OUT. Your name will then be on the list for a period of five years.

How can I better protect myself and my family from fraudulent activity? Be aware; if your suspicion is aroused, you should look at the issue more in-depth. If something seems too good to be true, it probably is. In many instances, simply by conducting an Internet search, you will confirm your suspicions. If you do not find anything on the Internet, but are still concerned, please contact ISMO.

SCAM

Scams are regrettably common throughout the world. Like any country, the United States has its share of scams or fraudulent activities—varying in nature and frequency. Related specifically to

banking, however, is a scam known as “phishing”. “Phishing” is a scam, usually by e-mail or ‘pop-up’ messages, and it is one of the most common scams in the US. The message may ask you to ‘update’, ‘validate’ or ‘confirm’ your account information or risk facing consequences— these messages exist simply to trick you into divulging your personal information. Phishing is also common by telephone and regular postal service, in which you are requested to provide personal information such as bank account numbers, social security numbers, passwords, etc., which is then used to steal your money, or identity.

What scams should I be aware of regarding money orders, certified checks and wiring of funds? When purchasing or selling goods, you should only send or accept the exact amount of money required by the transaction. For example: If you are selling a car for \$5,000, you should only accept certified funds or \$5,000, exact amount of the transaction, and then ensure (through the financial institution with whom you deal) that the funds have ‘cleared’ your account prior to delivering or shipping the item.

Is there any recourse against these scams? No, not in practical terms. There is essentially no viable recourse as it normally involves the use of multiple names, addresses in other countries, untraceable or blocked telephone numbers, and other methods of covering the scammer’s tracks.

Can I complain if I am inadvertently involved in a scam? Consumers can file a complaint online with the FTC (<http://www.ftc.gov>) or with the Internet Crime Complaint Center (<http://www.ic3.gov>); however, the likelihood of recovering your money or item once shipped is slight. To receive the latest information about cyber scams, consult the FBI website (<http://www.fbi.gov>) and sign up for email alerts by clicking the envelope icon on the right side of the navigation bar.

Don’t become a victim of cyber fraud!

- Do not click or respond to unsolicited (spam) emails.
- Be cautious of emails claiming to contain pictures in attached files, as the files may contain viruses. Only open attachments from known senders.
- Always compare the link in the email with the link to which you are directed and determine if they match and will lead you to a legitimate site.
- Log on directly onto the official website for the business identified in the email, instead of ‘linking’ to it from an unsolicited email or contact the actual business that supposedly sent the email to verify if the email is genuine.
- If you are asked to act quickly, or there is an emergency, it may be a scam. Fraudsters create a sense of urgency to get you to act quickly.
- Before entering any credit card information on any site make sure the site is secure.
- Turn off your phone/computer/tablet Bluetooth whenever it is not in use and try to avoid using Wi-Fi in public places; when your Bluetooth is on unnecessarily, people can use these portals to access information on your device.

IDENTITY THEFT

Is identity theft a big problem? The US Government answer to identity theft is “Deter, Detect, and Defend.” Although you may be cautious and protective of your personal information and documents, identity theft does occur.

What should I do to avoid my identity being stolen? You should ensure that you shred items containing personal information (credit card/bank statements, personal checks/check [new/old/cancelled], tax information, applications from credit card companies pre-printed with your name and address, etc.) prior to placing in the trash. Additionally, you can take extra precautions by purchasing a RFID-blocking wallet or sleeve to keep your credit cards in to avoid “electronic pickpocketing”.

There are a wealth of tips and information available on the Internet regarding how to protect against identity theft, including on the website of the US Federal Trade Commission, which you can find here: <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/idtheft/>

Most financial institutions provide information on ‘phishing’ to its customers upon opening an account; however, here are a few tips:

- Never link to your financial institution’s web site through e-mail—always type the name of your bank’s online service. Once you connect to your bank’s online service, ensure that the web address is “https” and not simply “http”, as the “s” in “https” ensures you are on a ‘secure’ web site.
- Never supply personal account information by e-mail (financial institutions, including credit card companies, never request your personal account information or personal identification number).
- In many instances, the correspondence includes the logo or symbol of the financial institution, or “verified by Visa®”, for example—this does not confirm the authenticity.
- Review your account statements regularly to ensure you have conducted and authorized all transactions.
- Protect your social security number (SSN) (if one has been issued to you) and credit card numbers.
- Review your bank account and credit card statements upon receipt.
- Protect your passwords.
- Use anti-virus software.
- If you receive ‘spam’ e-mail ‘phishing’ for information, forward it to the webmaster of your financial institution—do NOT respond to the sender.