

HAVE DOCUMENTS? WE'LL SHRED

Spring is well on its way, and tax time is just around the corner – a signal for many Calgarians to re-organize and clean up their homes and their files.

Identity theft is one of the fastest-growing crimes in Canada. Throwing unopened mail in the recycling bin, or trashing old computer discs or memory cards in the sweep can put you at great risk for criminals using your information to impersonate you and engage in other fraudulent activity at your expense.

The Alberta Motor Association (AMA) has partnered with the Calgary Police Service, the RCMP and Shred It to host several public shredding events, providing Calgarians an opportunity to get rid of personal documents the right way.

The first Calgary Shred It event will be held on Thursday, March 11, 2010, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Kerby Centre, located at 1133 7 Ave. S.W.

Media are invited to attend between 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. for interviews.

Representatives from AMA and law enforcement will be on hand for media interviews and photo opportunities, and media can capture pictures and video of seniors properly disposing of their personal documents.

Officers will also be available to show how to destroy hard drives and other data devices. Just 'erasing' or 'deleting' information on these items isn't enough.

We would like to thank our media for their dedication to assisting us in educating Calgarians about crime prevention. There are future shredding events that members of the public are invited to attend.

Future shredding events will be held on:

Saturday, March 13, 2010, from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. at the following locations:

- AMA Calgary Sunridge centre: 3650 - 20 Ave. N.E.
- AMA Shawnessy centre: 600 85 Shawville Blvd. S.E.
- AMA Crowfoot Crossing 130 Crowfoot Tc. N.W. (Southeast of Montana's)

Saturday, April 3, 2010, from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. at:

- AMA Calgary Main centre: 4700 17 Ave. S.W.
- Southcentre Mall: 100 Anderson Rd. S.E.)
- Calgary Police Service District 1 Ramsay Office:1010 26 Ave. S.E.

Note: These events are only open to private citizens (not businesses) who are disposing of personal documents. Organizers ask that no more than six boxes of material be brought per person.

Shredded documents can be recycled in City of Calgary blue carts and at community recycling depots, but must be placed in a clear plastic bag with the handles tied so they can be easily sorted at the recycling facility.

Learn about this and more as part of Fraud Prevention Month, held every March since 2006.

Visit ama.ab.ca/fraud for more information on fraud and tips on how to protect yourself or ama.ab.ca/shredding for more information on what documents you should be shredding and how often. If you have suffered a financial loss due to fraud, call your local police service.

The Alberta Motor Association (AMA) is the largest membership organization in Alberta, representing more than 889,000 members. As a leading advocate for traffic safety, travel and consumer protection, crime prevention, and the environment, AMA represents the interests of its members and the motoring public to industry and all levels of government. Visit ama.ab.ca to learn more about AMA's products, services and member advocacy initiatives.