



## Identity Theft Tops List of FTC Complaints in 2010

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This month, the Federal Trade Commission released its list of the top ten consumer complaints received by the agency in 2010. This list represents a good indication of some of the areas toward which the FTC may direct its resources and increase its scrutiny.

For the 11th year in a row, identity theft was the number one consumer complaint category. Approximately 19% of the complaints received in 2010 (or 250,854 out of the 1,339,265 complaints) were related to identity theft. Debt collection complaints were second among the top complaints received by the agency, and internet services were third.

“Imposter scams” also made the list for the first time, coming in at number 6. “Imposter scams” involve people who pose as friends, family, respected companies, or government agencies to get consumers to send them money. The rise in imposter scams has prompted the FTC to issue a new consumer alert, “Spotting an Imposter,” to help consumers avoid these commonplace scams.

The FTC Report also breaks down complaint data on a state-by-state basis. According to the report, residents of Colorado filed the most fraud complaints per capita, followed by Maryland. Residents of Florida and Arizona filed the most identity theft complaints.

The top 10 consumer complaints for 2010 were:

1. Identity Theft (19% of complaints received)



2. Debt Collection (11% of complaints received)
3. Internet Services (5% of complaints received)
4. Prizes, Sweepstakes and Lotteries (5% of complaints received)
5. Shop-at-home and Catalog Sales (4% of complaints received)
6. Imposter scams (4% of complaints received)
7. Internet Auctions (4% of complaints received)
8. Foreign Money/Counterfeit check Scams (3% of complaints received)
9. Telephone and Mobile Services (3% of complaints received)
10. Credit Cards (2% of complaints received)

The data comes from the Consumer Sentinel Network, a law enforcement database that also includes complaints filed with the Better Business Bureau, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and select state agencies. Total complaints for 2010 were slightly lower than those reported in 2009. A full list of the top FTC complaints for 2010 can be found on page 6 [of the FTC report](#).

*FTC Beat is authored by the [Ifrah Law Firm](#), a Washington DC-based law firm specializing in the defense of government investigations and litigation. Our client base spans many regulated industries, particularly e-business, e-commerce, government contracts, gaming and healthcare.*

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