



NEWS

CRIME & PUNISHMENT



Personal data stolen in Nev. DMV break-in

Burglary affects nearly 9,000 people, authorities say

MSNBC staff and news service reports

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Burglars of a Department of Motor Vehicles office in Las Vegas made off with the personal information of nearly 9,000 people, officials say, leaving those compromised at risk of having their finances sabotaged by identity thieves.

Authorities say the thieves took a computer that contained the private data of 8,737 people, including Social Security numbers, signatures and pictures of residents, the Las Vegas Review-Journal reported.

The thieves also escaped with 1,700 blank licenses and license-making equipment, the newspaper reported.



Identity theft

What to do when it happens

Officials initially said the information stolen in Monday's robbery was encrypted, and thus was inaccessible to the thieves. On Friday, however, authorities said the company that provides digital driver's licenses in Nevada told them the data was not encrypted but instead was readily accessible.

"Those motorists whose data was on that computer need to know their personal information has been compromised," the Review-Journal quoted Ginny Lewis, the department's director, as saying. "We don't know how serious this threat is, but it needs to be taken seriously."

Individuals who believe they may be the victims of identity theft are advised to look for signs of suspicious activity on bank statements and credit card reports.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.