

## Attorney General Abbott protects Texas consumers from identity theft

By media release  
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CORPUS CHRISTI - Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott took legal action Monday against Fort Worth-based RadioShack Corporation for exposing its customers to identity theft. According to documents filed by the Attorney General, RadioShack violated a 2005 law requiring businesses to protect any consumer records that contain sensitive information, including Social Security and bank account numbers.

Investigators with the Office of the Attorney General discovered that a RadioShack store in Portland, near Corpus Christi, exposed thousands of its customers' personal identifying information. The investigation was launched after reports indicated company employees dumped bulk customer records in garbage containers behind the store. According to investigators, the records contained sensitive consumer information, including Social Security numbers, credit and debit card information, names, addresses, and telephone numbers. The records included personal information from one consumer's 1998 credit application and another receipt from a local woman who, ironically, purchased a shredder from RadioShack in order to protect herself from identity theft. Also discovered among the discarded records was sensitive information from a credit card issued to the City of Portland, according to Portland Police Chief Randy Wright, who joined Attorney General Abbott Monday in denouncing the store's actions.

"Identity theft is one of the fastest growing crimes in the United States," Attorney General Abbott said. "Texans expect their personal information to be protected. The Office of the Attorney General will take all necessary steps to ensure that consumers are protected from identity thieves."

RadioShack is accused of violating provisions of the 2005 Identity Theft Enforcement and Protection Act, which requires the protection and proper destruction of clients' sensitive personal information. Corpus Christi Sen. Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa sponsored the legislation, which gives the Office of the Attorney General authority to seek penalties of up to \$50,000 per violation.

The Attorney General also charged RadioShack with violations under Chapter 35 of the Business and Commerce Code, which requires businesses to develop retention and disposal procedures for their clients' personal information. The law provides for civil penalties of up to \$500 for each abandoned record. Attorney General investigators are also working to determine if any exposed data has been used illegally. Consumers who interacted with the Portland store should carefully monitor bank, credit card and any similar statements for evidence of theft. Customers should also consider obtaining free copies of their credit reports.

Today's legal action against RadioShack is the third identity theft enforcement action by the Office of the Attorney General in the last two weeks. On March 13, Attorney General Abbott took legal action against On Track Modeling, a North Carolina-based talent agency that abruptly shut down its Grand Prairie office and abandoned more than 60 boxes containing hundreds of confidential client records. On March 14, the Attorney General took legal action against Jones Beauty College in Dallas for improperly discarding student financial aid forms containing Social Security numbers and other personal information.