

## FTC ADVISORY – FRAUD ALERTS VS. CREDIT FREEZES

ISSUE	FRAUD ALERT	CREDIT FREEZE
<p><b>DEFINITION: What do fraud alerts and credit freezes do?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A business must try to verify a consumer’s identity before extending new credit.</li> <li>• Call to check if the person is at the store attempting to get credit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No one – including the consumer – can access the consumer’s credit report to open a new account.</li> <li>• If consumers put a credit freeze in place, they’ll get a PIN number to use each time they want to freeze, unfreeze, and refreeze their account.</li> </ul> <p><i>NOTE: Credit freezes are a powerful tool, but it’s not a one-size-fits-all thing. If consumers are about to apply for new credit – for example, a mortgage, car loan, or student loan – they should consider the cost and potential hassle of unfreezing and refreezing each time. But for people who won’t need new credit anytime soon, a credit freeze may be a good choice.</i></p>
<p><b>DURATION: How long do fraud alerts and credit freezes last?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lasts for 90 days.</li> <li>• If not renewed, automatically expires.</li> <li>• Identity theft victims are entitled to an <a href="#">extended fraud alert</a>, which last seven years.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lasts until the consumer temporarily lifts it or permanently removes it.</li> <li>• In a few states, it expires after seven years.</li> </ul>
<p><b>COST: How much do fraud alerts and credit freezes cost?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Fraud alerts</b> are free.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depending on the state law, <b>credit freezes</b> may involve fees. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ For Identity Theft Victims in most states, they’re free</li> <li>○ For others, they cost about \$5 to \$10 each time the consumer freezes or unfreezes their account with each credit reporting agency.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>IMPLEMENTATION: How can a consumer put a fraud alert or credit freeze in place?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For a <b>fraud alert</b>, consumers can contact any one of the three major credit reporting agencies <a href="#">by phone or online</a>.</li> <li>• The law requires that the credit reporting agency notify the other two of the consumer’s fraud alert request.</li> <li>• Identity theft victims who want an extended fraud alert must mail or upload their Identity Theft Report, which they can create at <a href="#">IdentityTheft.gov</a>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To put a <b>credit freeze</b> in place, consumers must contact each of the three credit reporting agencies separately at the companies’ <a href="#">credit freeze portals</a></li> </ul>

Source: [Fraud alerts vs. credit freezes: FTC FAQs](#) FTC MORE INFORMATION: If customers, colleagues, or friends have more questions, the FTC has three publications of interest:

- [Place a Fraud Alert](#),
- [Credit Freeze FAQs](#)
- [Extended Fraud Alerts and Credit Freezes](#)