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CLIENT ALERT: Navigating Unemployment Fraud and Identity Theft
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In the wake of COVID-19 and enriched unemployment programs, scammers are using stolen information, including social security numbers, to apply for unemployment benefits. Unemployment claims are currently delayed to allow for further review. If you or your employee suspects their information has been compromised and used to obtain unemployment compensation, we recommend taking the following steps:

- **Make a report to the MDOL:** individuals who are the victims of unemployment identity theft should report their concerns to the Maine Dept. of Labor through their [website](#). The MDOL states that victims of identity theft will not have to repay unemployment money and will still be able to apply for unemployment benefits.
- **Make a report to the FTC:** individuals can also report the incident and receive a recovery plan from the Federal Trade Commission at [identitytheft.gov](#).
- **Credit freeze:** the Maine Attorney General's Office recommends placing a credit freeze on your credit report. This will not impact your credit score. Contact information for the three major credit agencies is available on the Maine Attorney General's [website](#).
- **Contact your financial institutions:** the Maine Attorney General's Office also recommends individuals monitor their financial accounts and contact creditors and/or financial institutions if accounts have been tampered with, or if fraudulent accounts have been opened.

The MDOL encourages employers to be proactive in reducing fraud by reporting new hires and re-hires to the State Directory, and by working with the MDOL to verify wages, earnings, and separations. For more information, or to discuss a specific matter, please contact Peter Lowe at plowe@brannlaw.com or 207-754-5672, or Dan Stockford at dstockford@brannlaw.com or 207-607-3290.