

NIBRS Tip of the Month

The Difference Between Impersonation and Identity Theft

Impersonation does not involve a real person as the victim while Identity Theft does involve a real person as the victim.

Definition of offense “Impersonation”:

Falsely representing one’s position and acting in the character or position thus unlawfully assumed, to deceive others and thereby gain a profit or advantage, enjoy some right or privilege, or subject another person or entity to an expense, charge, or liability which would not have been incurred otherwise.

Example of Impersonation: Pretending to be a representative of a Scouting Organization in order to collect cash “donations”.



Definition of offense “Identity Theft”:

Wrongfully obtaining and using another person’s personal data (e.g., name, date of birth, social security number, driver’s license number, credit card number).

Example of Identity Theft: Using the name, birthdate, and social security of your spouse’s ex-wife or ex-husband to apply for a new credit card.

