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Banks Collaborate to Remind Consumers to Protect Logins While Traveling

(February 2026) As winter travel season continues, area banks are reminding consumers to take extra precautions to protect online accounts and personal information while away from home. From streaming services and vacation rentals to rental cars and public Wi-Fi, forgotten logins can create easy entry points for fraudsters.

As more consumers rely on apps, smart TVs, and connected devices while traveling, criminals are increasingly exploiting unsecured accounts and saved credentials. Advances in technology, including artificial intelligence, have made this type of fraud easier and faster to carry out.

“Staying logged into an account after checkout can give fraudsters access to personal information,” said Rochley Gross, Fraud Manager at Forward Bank. “We see cases where criminals take advantage of leftover logins on smart TVs, apps, or shared devices because people don’t realize the risk until later.”

Streaming services and vacation rentals are among the most common risks. Banks encourage travelers to sign out of accounts before checkout, avoid saving passwords on shared devices, and use features such as guest mode, profile PINs, or remote device management when available. Setting a calendar reminder to log out can also help prevent missed steps.

Rental vehicles can present another overlooked vulnerability. Infotainment systems connected through Bluetooth may store contacts, call logs, and saved locations. Travelers should delete their phone from the system, clear location history, and remove any personal data before returning the vehicle.

Public Wi-Fi networks in hotels, rentals, and airports also increase exposure. Banks recommend using private or incognito browsing modes, enabling multifactor or two-factor authentication on all accounts, and using a trusted virtual private network (VPN) when accessing sensitive information.

“Travel often puts people in environments where convenience takes priority,” said Andrew Henning, AVP of Compliance at Northwestern Bank. “Taking a few extra moments to log out, clear saved data, and use added security measures can significantly reduce the risk of account compromise.”

Consumers are encouraged to review account settings, change passwords if they believe a login may have been left active, and monitor accounts closely for unusual activity. Anyone with concerns should contact their financial institution using verified contact information.

Working together, local banks continue to focus on education and prevention to help consumers safeguard their financial well-being wherever their travels take them.

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