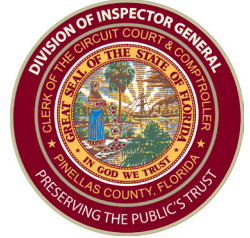


# PINELLAS COUNTY CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT AND COMPTROLLER

## INSPECTOR GENERAL



April 2016

## PROPERTY FRAUD: HOW TO COMBAT IT

According to the FBI, Property and Mortgage Fraud is the fastest growing white-collar crime. Property Fraud is when someone illegally uses your property for financial gain. An instance of this entails someone recording a fraudulent deed and/or lien against your property in the Official Records of the Pinellas County Clerk's office.



### YOU HAVE A HIGHER RISK OF BEING A VICTIM OF PROPERTY FRAUD IF:

- Your identity has been stolen
- You rent out your property
- You live overseas
- The property is vacant
- The property is not mortgaged

### What is Pinellas County doing about property fraud?

To address these concerns for Pinellas County citizens, Ken Burke, the Pinellas County Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller, has created a Property Fraud Alert subscription service. This **free** public service can help you detect fraudulent documents recorded with your name in the Clerk's Official Records.

### How does this alert work?

Once you sign up for the service you will receive an alert, from that day forward, of any document recorded with your name in the Official Records. The alert you receive, either by phone or email, will contain the document number and type, along with the recorded date and name. Using this information, you can easily search the Clerk's Official Records online to see if the alert pertains to you.

### What does this service monitor?

The name you choose to subscribe (business name, maiden name, married name, etc.) is the only criteria being monitored. If you have a common name, you may receive multiple alerts since the service does not distinguish one name from another.

### Does this service prevent property fraud?

Although the alert service does not prevent the actual fraudulent activity from taking place, it does provide an early warning system for subscribers to become aware of what may have otherwise gone undetected. Subscribers armed with this notification system will be able to take prompt, appropriate action if they determine the activity to be fraudulent.

### How do I sign up?

You can easily sign up for the **FREE** Property Fraud Alert service by visiting the Clerk's website ([www.mypinellasclerk.org](http://www.mypinellasclerk.org)) or by calling the Property Fraud Alert Hotline at 1-800-728-3858.

For more information on this service or if you have any questions, please call Recording Services at (727) 464-4876.