



Stay Ahead of Deed Theft with ACRIS Alerts

Disclaimer: This advice is for informational purposes only and is not legal advice. The information provided here does not constitute an attorney-client relationship.

Deed theft is a crime where fraudsters take ownership of someone's property without their knowledge or consent. Deed thieves often target older homeowners or those in financial trouble, disproportionately impacting marginalized communities in New York City. Losing your home to deed theft can mean millions of dollars in lost equity, preventing families from building generational wealth. Luckily, New York City and civil legal service providers Build Up Justice NYC have worked to prevent this crime.

One easy way you can stay ahead of deed thieves is by signing up for free ACRIS alerts. This publicly available tool will notify you if there is a new document recorded against your property—such as a contract of sale, deed, memorandum of lease, or mortgage. Scammers will often file fake versions of these documents in their effort to claim that they own a home when they don't. If you see a document connected to your home that is unfamiliar to you, you can submit a fraud notice quickly to prevent the risk of deed theft down the line.

Here's how to set up your ACRIS alerts:

- 1) Visit the “Automated City Register Information System” page on the New York City Department of Finance website. [Click here to visit the link](#). The page looks like this:

The screenshot shows the "Automated City Register Information System" page from the New York City Department of Finance, Office of the City Register. The page has a blue header with the title "Automated City Register Information System" and a yellow banner below it that says "Notice of Recorded Document". The main content area is white and contains a "Purpose" section with a detailed explanation of the ACRIS program. Below this is a "Property Address" section with a radio button labeled "Property Address:". Underneath, there is a paragraph of instructions and a form with four fields: "Borough / County:" (a dropdown menu), "House Number:" (a text input field), "Street Name:" (a text input field), and "Unit/Apartment Number:" (a text input field). The form fields are marked with red asterisks to indicate they are required.



- 2) Fill out the address of the property you want alerts for—you have the option to use the property address or the block and lot number.

Property Address

☒ **Property Address:**

If you know the property address, complete the fields below and press "Find BBL" to find the Borough/Block/Lot of the property. Address fields indicated by an asterisk (*) are required. If the property is a Condominium Unit that has a Unit/Apartment Number, the Unit Number is required. If an address is found, the fields in the Property Borough/Block/Lot section will be populated.

Borough / County: *

House Number: *

Street Name: *

Unit/Apartment Number:

☐ **Property Borough/Block/Lot:**

If you know the Borough, Block and Lot of the property, complete the fields below and press the "Find Address" button to find the address of the property. Fields indicated by an asterisk (*) are required. If the BBL is found, the fields in the Property Address section will be populated.

Borough / County:

Block:

Lot:

If the entered BBL is not valid or the entered address does not have a BBL, an error message will display. If you enter the address and the property is a Condominium Unit that has a Unit/Apartment Number, the Unit Number is required.

- 3) Select "Receive Notification" and then add your information under "Registrant Information." If you want to stop notifications later on, return to this page and select "Delete Notification."

Notification Options

To register to receive notification, select the **Receive Notification** button. If you no longer wish to receive notification, select the **Delete Notification** button. The Delete Notification selection will disable all remaining entry fields except the email address and once you submit will cancel a previously submitted notification request.

☒ **Receive Notification** ☐ **Delete Notification**

Registrant Information

Enter your name, select your interest in property from the drop down list, and enter your mailing address and telephone number as indicated. This information is not required if you check the Delete box. Your name, address and telephone number is required for informational purposes only. If you select "Other" as your interest in property, enter the interest in the field that opens directly below the drop down box.

Name *

Interest in Property *

Address Line 1 *

Address Line 2

City *

State *

Zip Code *

Telephone Number * (999-999-9999)



- 4) Select how you would like to receive alerts—either by email or text. If you choose to receive alerts by email, make sure to add acrisnrd@finance.nyc.gov as a safe sender on your email account so the notifications don't go to spam. If you want text alerts, you'll need to enter the cell phone carrier's domain. The website gives this instruction: "For example, a Verizon subscriber whose phone number is 555-555-5555 would enter 5555555555@vtext.com while an AT&T subscriber whose phone number is 555-555-5555 would enter 5555555555@txt.att.net." Cell phone alerts may result in an additional fee depending on your plan. Once you have entered everything correctly, click "Submit."

A screenshot of a web form for selecting notification preferences. The form is titled 'Choose to have your notification sent by either email or SMS by selecting the appropriate button below.' It includes instructions for email and SMS notifications. There are two radio buttons: 'Email' (selected) and 'SMS'. Below these are input fields for 'Email' and 'Confirm Email'. A 'Certification' section contains a paragraph of text and a checkbox for 'I agree to these terms.' At the bottom are 'Submit' and 'Cancel' buttons. A footer note says 'Click "Submit" to submit your request or click "Cancel" to clear all information entered on this page.'

- 5) You should receive an email confirmation after you click "Submit." If you do not receive an email within 15 minutes, you may need to try again. If you try multiple times with the correct information and are still having issues, call 311 for help.

Submitting a Fraud Notice:

To file a fraud complaint, visit the NYC Department of Finance's website and fill out the "online complaint form" ([click here for the link](#)).

You will have the option to fill out the form as a business or as an individual. You will need to provide a description of the attempted deed fraud and give a valid email address. However, your email address will not be included in the case referral and you can choose to file the complaint anonymously—there's an optional section where you can include personal information if you'd like.

The NYC Department of Finance's website notes that you may not receive any updates once the complaint is filed.