

Build a Strong Credit Record

Your credit history lists all your loans including credit cards, how much you owe and how timely your payments are, and can be reviewed by landlords, employers and car loan companies. It follows you everywhere! Review these tips for managing your credit wisely to ensure a healthy financial future:

- ✓ Study your Cardholder agreement. It contains important information about your annual percentage rate (APR), interest-free period for purchases, annual fees, cash advance fees and interest charges.
- ✓ Use your credit wisely. Keep track of your current purchases. Avoid large impulse purchases, and don't use a cash advance to cover normal daily expenses.
- ✓ Stay within your credit limit. This helps you avoid penalties and saves available credit for emergencies.
- ✓ Be alert! Review your statements carefully. If you suspect a mistake has been made, call your financial institution.
- ✓ Don't get in too deep. Try to pay off your total balance each month.
- ✓ At least make the minimum payment, and always pay on time.
- ✓ Safety first! Protect your personal information.
- ✓ Never give out your credit card number, address or phone number unless you're making a telephone, mail-order or online purchase — make sure online purchases are made on secure systems. Don't use your card as identification.
- ✓ Report stolen or lost cards immediately.
- ✓ Contact your financial institution to report the loss or theft of your card and arrange for a replacement card to be mailed to you. You should keep a copy of your financial institution's name, its customer service phone number and your account number in a convenient place separate from your card.



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