

YOUR CREDIT RIGHTS:

How to Handle a Dispute with a Merchant:

If you are dissatisfied with an item or a service purchased with your card, you must start by making an attempt to resolve the issue with the merchant. Your Card issuer will provide many of the phone numbers in the transaction detail on your statement to facilitate your attempts to resolve with the merchant.

Watch for Billing Errors.

If your bill is incorrect, or if you want more information about a transaction, first attempt to resolve the issue with the merchant and second, call the customer service telephone number on your credit card statement. You should call the card issuer within 60 days after they send you the bill on which the error appeared.

Guard Your Card.

Keep your information secure. With the exception of online, telephone and mail-order transactions, you should never be required to supply your address, phone number or other personal information in order to use your credit card. If paying by check, never allow someone to write your account number on the check.

Never give your account number to someone calling you on the phone, even if the caller says it will be used to claim a valuable prize or award. If your account has a personal identification number (PIN) for use at ATM locations, don't write it down. Memorize it instead. And it's a good idea not to pick an obvious PIN, like your address, phone number or date of birth.

Help with your Credit Rights:

Your rights as a credit user have been established through the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, Truth-In-Lending Act, and Fair Credit Billing Act. For more detailed information on your credit rights, contact the Federal Trade Commission at (202) 326-2222 or the National Consumers League at (202) 835-3323.

Creating Good Credit:

It's good to think of consumer credit as a privilege that you need to handle responsibly.

Know your Limit (Don't go over the edge).

Obey your credit limit. Exceeding your limit is usually considered a violation of your account agreement and may incur additional fees or penalties, or the freezing or cancellation of your account.

Pay on Time.

Whether you choose to make the minimum payment or pay the total outstanding balance, your payment must reach the financial institution or business by the payment due date. Otherwise, you will incur late fees and it may affect your credit history.

Stay in Good Graces.

Most payment cards offer an interest-free period within which you can pay off the total balance of your account and avoid any interest charges. In a way, it's like an interest-free loan for up to 30 days: purchases paid off during the current billing period do not accrue interest. In fact, many consumers pay their balance in full during this period.

Get to Know Your APR.

Because institutions often use different systems for computing interest charges, your Annual Percentage Rate (or APR) is a valuable number to know. If you plan to carry a balance on your account often, it may make sense to shop around for a lower APR, even if you must pay a higher annual cardholder fee.

Keep in Touch.

If you change your name, address or job, notify your lending institution immediately. Your payment could turn into a late payment in the time it takes for the postal service to forward a statement to your new address. Also, contact your lender if you cannot make a payment on your account for any reason. Special payment options or agreements may be arranged that will satisfy both you and your lender, while keeping your good credit history intact.



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