

## Consumer Bill of Rights

The [Federal Trade Commission](#) ("FTC") enforces credit laws that protect consumer's rights to obtain, use, and maintain credit. The [Fair Credit Reporting Act](#) ("FCRA") was designed to help ensure credit reporting agencies ("CRA") furnish correct and complete information to businesses to use when evaluating a consumer's application.

Under the FCRA:

- **You must be told if information in your file has been used against you.** Anyone who uses information from a credit-reporting agency to take action against you - such as denying an application for credit, insurance, or employment - must tell you, and give you the name, address, and phone number of the credit-reporting agency that provided the credit report.
- **You can find out what is in your file.** At your request, a credit-reporting agency must give you the information in your file, and a list of everyone who has requested it recently. There is no charge for the report if a person has taken action against you because of information supplied by the credit reporting agency, if you request the report within 60 days of receiving notice of the action. You are also entitled to one free report every twelve months, upon request, if you certify that (1) you are unemployed and plan to seek employment within 60 days; (2) you are on welfare; or (3) your report is inaccurate due to fraud.
- **You can dispute inaccurate information with the credit-reporting agency.** If you tell a credit-reporting agency that your file contains inaccurate information, the credit-reporting agency must investigate the items (usually within 30 days) by presenting to its information source all relevant evidence you submit, unless your dispute is frivolous. The source must review your evidence and report its findings to the credit-reporting agency. (The source also must advise national credit reporting agencies - to which it has provided the data - of any error.) The credit-reporting agency must give you a written report of the investigation, and a copy of your report if the investigation results in any change. If the credit reporting agency's investigation does not resolve the dispute, you may add a brief statement to your file. The credit-reporting agency must normally include a summary of your statement in future reports. If an item is deleted or a dispute statement is filed, you may ask that anyone who has recently received your report be notified of the change.
- **Inaccurate information must be corrected or deleted.** A credit-reporting agency must remove or correct inaccurate or unverified information from its files, usually within 30 days after you dispute it. **However, the credit-reporting agency is not required to remove accurate data from your file unless it is outdated (as described below) or cannot be verified.** If your dispute results in any change to your report, the credit-reporting agency cannot reinsert into your file a disputed item unless the information source verifies its accuracy and completeness. In addition, the credit reporting agency must give you a written notice telling you it has reinserted the item. The notice must include the name, address, and phone number of the information source.
- **You can dispute inaccurate items with the source of the information.** If you tell anyone - such as a creditor who reports to a credit reporting agency - that you dispute an item, they may not then report the information to a credit reporting agency without including a notice of your dispute. In addition, once you've notified the source of the error in writing, it may not continue to report the information if it is, in fact, an error.
- **Outdated information may not be reported.** In most cases, a credit reporting agency may not report negative information that is more than seven years old; ten years for bankruptcies.
- **Access to your file is limited.** A credit-reporting agency may provide information about you only to people with a need recognized by the FCRA - usually to consider an application with a creditor, insurer, employer, landlord, or other business.

- **Your consent is required for reports that are provided to employers, or reports that contain medical information.** A credit-reporting agency may not give out information about you to your employer, or prospective employer, without your written consent. A credit-reporting agency may not report medical information about you to creditors, insurers, or employers without your permission.
- **You may choose to exclude your name from credit reporting agency lists for unsolicited credit and insurance offers.** Creditors and insurers may use file information as the basis for sending you unsolicited offers of credit or insurance. Such offers must include a toll-free phone number for you to call if you want your name and address removed from future lists. If you call, you must be kept off the lists for two years. If you request, complete, and return the credit reporting agency form provided for this purpose, you must be taken off the lists indefinitely.
- **You may seek damages from violators.** If a credit reporting agency, a user, or (in some cases) a provider of credit reporting agency data violates the FCRA, you may sue them in state or federal court.

The FCRA gives several different federal agencies authority to enforce the FCRA:

For Questions or Concerns Regarding:	
Credit reporting agencies, creditors, and others not listed below	Federal Trade Commission Consumer Response Center – FCRA Washington, DC 20580 * 202-326-3761
National banks, federal branches/agencies of foreign banks (word "National" or initials "N.A." appear in or after bank's name)	Office of the Comptroller of the Currency Compliance Management Mail Stop 6-6 Washington, DC 20219 * 800-613-6743
Federal Reserve System member banks (except national banks, and federal branches/agencies of foreign banks)	Federal Reserve Board Division of Consumer & Community Affairs Washington, DC 20551 * 202-452-3693
Savings associations and federally chartered savings banks (word "Federal" or initials "F.S.B." appear in federal institution's name)	Office of Thrift Supervision Consumer Programs Washington, DC 20552 * 800-842-6929
Federal credit unions (words "Federal Credit Union" appear in institution's name)	National Credit Union Administration 1775 Duke Street Alexandria, VA 22314 * 703-518-6360
State-chartered banks that are not members of the Federal Reserve System	Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation Division of Compliance & Consumer Affairs Washington, DC 20429 * 800-934-FDIC
Air, surface, or rail common carriers regulated by former Civil Aeronautics Board or Interstate Commerce Commission	Department of Transportation Office of Financial Management Washington, DC 20590 * 202-366-1306
Activities subject to the Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921	Department of Agriculture Office of Deputy Administrator –GIPSA Washington, DC 20250 * 202-720-7051

For the complete text of the FCRA, 15 U.S.C. §§1681-1681u and consumer rights, go to the Federal Trade Commission's web site <http://www.ftc.gov>.