

What If I Have Problems With My Credit Report

The following procedures should help to resolve any problems with your creditors, remove any inaccurate information from your credit file due to fraudulent activity, and help to prevent further credit card fraud.

- **STEP 1** - Contact all three consumer reporting agencies. They will remove your name from lists that they provide for pre-approved credit offers. Also, a six- month fraud alert will be added to your credit reports, which may help protect the credit file from being used fraudulently.
- Equifax Credit Information Services, Inc.
PO Box 105069
Atlanta, GA 30349
(800) 525-6285

Experian
PO Box 1017
Allen, TX 75013
(888) 397-3742

Trans Union
PO Box 6790
Fullerton, CA 92634
(800) 680-7289

In your communication to each of the agencies, explain that you may be a victim of fraud. Request a copy of your credit report and the business name and address of any credit grantors reporting unauthorized accounts or inquiries.

- **STEP 2** - Contact the credit grantors that are reporting information you believe is fraudulent and explain the situation.
 - Ask each credit grantor to explain their fraud investigation process and what steps you should take. They may require a police file or other paperwork to begin the process.
 - Ask how long the process normally takes.
 - Ask the credit grantors to notify all three consumer reporting agencies to delete the fraudulent information.
 - Ask each consumer grantor for a letter or documentation stating the results of the investigation.
 - If your ID information, such as driver's license and social security card, was lost or stolen, contact the appropriate agency.
- **STEP 3** - After receiving confirmation letter(s) from the credit grantor(s), please send a copy to the three consumer reporting agencies. Request that the consumer reporting agency send you an amended copy of your credit report to confirm the fraudulent information has been deleted. The process may take approximately thirty days.

How do I avoid becoming a victim of fraud?

In general, by taking measures to safeguard your sensitive information you will limit your exposure to ever increasing credit fraud.

- **To limit the potential for fraud if your credit cards are lost or stolen:**
 - Keep a list of the names, account numbers and the expiration dates of your cards in a safe place. This will aid you when alerting your credit grantors of the lost or stolen card.
 - Call your credit grantors immediately after discovering your cards are missing. Most have 24 hour toll free numbers for this purpose. If you reopen the account, ensure they have your correct address.
 - Carry only the identification and credit cards you need when traveling - whether locally or out of town.
 - Do not carry your credit cards in your checkbook.
 - If your checkbook is lost or stolen, call your bank. Inform it of the check numbers that are missing.
 - If your social security card is missing, contact the Social Security Administration.

- If your Driver's License is missing, contact the appropriate agency in your area.
- **To limit the potential for fraud when using your credit cards:**
 - Sign your credit cards in permanent ink as soon as you receive them.
 - When making a purchase, keep your card in view at all times. Retrieve it as soon as the transaction is complete and make sure it is yours.
 - Do not sign a blank charge slip. Draw a line through the lines above the total line.
 - Destroy any carbons.
 - Always save your receipts. Never leave them behind.
 - If requested to show a credit card as identification when using a check, do not let the sales clerk write down the account number.
 - Avoid saying your account number if others can hear.
 - Only provide your ID and credit card information over the phone to companies when you have initiated the call. Never provide it to a solicitor. If you are interested in the product, ask them to send you information. Any legitimate company will be happy to comply.
- **To limit the potential for fraud review your credit card statements:**
 - Check your statement as soon as it arrives to ensure the charges are correct.
 - Keep statements in a safe place. They contain sensitive information.
 - Before discarding old statements, even of closed accounts, rip them into small pieces or shred them.
 - If your statement does not arrive, call your credit card issuer.
 - If called by your issuer and the caller asks for your account number, do not provide it. If the caller is with the issuer, they will know your number.
- **To limit the potential for fraud when using ATMs and PINs:**
 - Shield your number while using the ATM.
 - Never leave your receipts behind.
 - Choose a PIN that is unique. Use a number other than your birthday, social security number or other obvious number.
 - Never write down your PIN in your checkbook or on your cards. It is best to memorize it.
- **To limit the potential for fraud when using the mail service:**
 - If your mail stops, check with the Post Office. Sometimes a fraud perpetrator submits a change of address in an attempt to get your mail.
 - If you apply for a new card and it does not arrive, contact the issuer.

How do I correct or dispute an error on one or more of my credit reports?

You should contact the appropriate consumer reporting agency (also known as credit bureau) and the lender directly. If you report an error to any of the consumer reporting agencies, they are required to investigate and respond to you within 30 days. If you are in the process of applying for a loan, immediately notify your lender of any incorrect information in your report. Your lender will need to reorder your credit report(s) and score once any changes have been made to your information at the consumer reporting agencies.

If you have purchased a FICO Score Report and believe there is an error in your credit file or it needs updating, you can use the directions provided in your report to contact the appropriate credit bureau. To do so, please login to the myFICO.com Member Center and open your report. Scroll to the bottom of any page of your report and you will see the information you need. You should follow these directions to file your request for investigation with the credit bureau.

Please note that Fair Isaac cannot correct data at the credit reporting agencies. You must follow the process described above.

How will credit changes affect my score?

It's impossible to say exactly how important any single factor or new information is in determining your score. That's because the importance of each factor depends on the overall information in your credit report. In scoring, what's important is the mix of information, which varies from person to person and for any one person over time.

Once an error is fixed, when is my score updated?

Your very next score will reflect the updated information. Since FICO scores are recalculated every time they are requested (rather than stored as part of your profile), they respond to meaningful changes instantly. What's a meaningful change? An update to your address, for example, would have no effect on your score. On the other hand, substantially lowering the balance on a maxed out credit card might have a notable impact on your score.