

DCC Dollars & Sense

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Credit Report Errors – How to Fix Them

Special points of interest:

- Types of errors commonly found on credit reports
- The best way to dispute an error.
- Who to contact and how?

Have you looked at your credit reports lately? Have you ever looked at your credit reports? Reports come from three different bureaus: Equifax, Experian, and Transunion. The information found in the credit reports is provided by the creditors that have given you a credit card or lent you money. It's useful to examine what information is there since companies/lenders granting credit to you will look there to find just how credit worthy you are. Maybe you had your first introduction with your credit report after applying for credit, and getting denied because of information reported. It could be especially unnerving if the information is not accurate.

Credit report errors affect the majority of consumers. Those errors overlooked by you, will not be passed over by creditors considering whether

or not to extend credit to you.

There are enough occurrences in life that may impact your credit negatively, so take the time to correct the items that should not be there. It's a simple process, just time consuming.

The first step is identifying the errors. These may include the following:

- 1) items you did not purchase items delivered to you that you never accepted
- 2) items you purchased that show inaccurate dates or amounts
- 3) not reflecting your current balance and/or payments
- 4) not sending the bill to your current address (you are responsible for giving the creditor at least 20 days notice prior to the end of the billing cycle)
- 5) items you do not recognize,

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and may require more information about

The next step is notifying the credit bureau (s) of the errors. Send a letter to each credit bureau that contains an error. Identify the specific issue, and enclose a copy of the credit report, highlighting the mistake (s). The credit bureaus are required to investigate and respond to any dispute submitted. If the investigation results in the creditor agreeing the information reported was incorrect, or if the creditor neglects to supply necessary supporting data, the credit bureau will remove the item (s) disputed by you.

If the creditor persists that the information already supplied is accurate, and you disagree, submit a written statement to the credit bureau (s) explaining your stand on the issue (the credit bureaus will limit the amount of words used, so be precise to the point).

Do not delay in disputing credit report errors. The Fair Credit Billing Act demands that creditors make corrections in a timely manner and without harming your report. It also mandates the creditor cannot pursue

you on the debt in dispute until the inquiry is resolved.

If the credit bureau (s) do not address your dispute in a fair and timely manner, contact the attorney general of your state, and/or call the Federal Trade Commission at (202) FTC-HELP. By law, you are protected, and you are entitled to be awarded damages accordingly. In addition, you have the right to sue any credit bureau or creditor for causing harm to your credit report and possibly prohibiting you from obtaining credit as a result.

Finally, be cautious and selective when applying for credit. Anyone you request credit from is allowed to pull your credit. Requesting credit from multiple lenders within a short time frame will appear to other creditors that you may be desperate for financing. They will be less likely to approve your application, and it will also negatively impact your score.

In summary, be proactive. Dispute inaccurate credit report information, and demand that your concerns are answered and that you are treated fairly. The law is in the consumer's corner!