

CREDIT SECRETS

HOW ONE COUPLE BEAT THE ODDS AND
TOOK CONTROL OF THEIR CREDIT &
FINANCES... AND HOW YOU CAN TOO!



SCOTT & ALISON HILTON



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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	7	Part 1, Letter #2B	52
Important Notes	6	Part 1, Letter #2C	54
Chapter 1: Getting Started		Part 1, Letter #3.....	56
Get Your Credit Reports	14	Part 1, Letter #4.....	58
Analyze Your Credit Reports	15	Pro Tip: The Automator.....	60
Credit Score Differences	21	Part 2 Letters	66
Facts About FICO Scores.....	22	Part 2, Letter #1.....	67
The Credit Bureaus	26	Part 2, Letter #2A.....	69
#Jumpstart Your Success.....	28	Part 2, Letter #2B	71
Remove Old Addresses.....	28	Part 2, Letter #3.....	73
How to Remove Inquiries from Your Credit Report	32	Chapter 3:	
Inquiry Removal Letter 1	34	Advanced Tactics	
Inquiry Removal Letter 2	35	Tax Liens	74
Inquiry Removal Letter 3	37	State Tax Liens	77
The Laws on Your Side When Dealing With Creditors, Collection Agencies and Credit Bureaus.....	38	The Loophole to Remove Liens, Judgments	78
Fair Debt Collection Practices Act	38	The Security “Freeze” Trick	80
Fair Credit Reporting Act	38	Data Miners	83
Fair Credit Billing Act	39	Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB).....	87
Metro 2 Compliance	39	Filing a CFPB Complaint	88
Dealing With Creditors.....	44	State Attorney General	89
Chapter 2: Getting		The Better Business Bureau.....	90
Inaccurate / Incomplete /		Other Types of Letters	101
Unfair / Unverifiable Items		Identity Theft Situations	101
Removed		Early Exclusion	103
Understanding “Disputed”	42	5 Day Reinsertion Letter.....	106
Part 1 Letters	44	Goodwill Letter.....	108
Part 1, Letter #1.....	48	Incomplete/Missing Info Letter....	109
Part 1, Letter #2A.....	50	Returned Mail Letter	110
		Alternative/Bizarre Letter.....	111

Chapter 4: Lawsuits

Small Claims Court.....	113
Examples of What You Could Potentially File Suit For and Against Whom	114
Tips During Court	118
What to do if YOU Are Sued.....	119
Liability Case Examples	120
Damages Case Examples	121
Finding a Registered Agent	123

Chapter 5: ChexSystems Removals

Are you in ChexSystems	127
ChexSystems Errors.....	127
Get Your ChexSystems Report...	127

Chapter 6: Student Loans, Repossessions, and HIPAA

Dealing with Student Loans.....	130
Vehicle Repossession	135
Repo Letter 1	139
Repo Letter 2.....	141
HIPAA & Medical Collections.....	142
Letter To Original Health Care Provider	143
HIPAA Collection Agency Validation, Dispute, Cease & Desist Letter ..	145

Chapter 7: Advanced Credit Techniques

Good Credit Lines Quickly.....	147
The Shopping Cart Trick.....	149
Utilizing Credit Unions	153
Business Credit	157
Bad Credit Resources	158
What To Do After Your Credit is Fixed.....	161

Chapter 8: Frequently Asked Questions

Getting Started	166
Credit Reports	166
Sending Letters	168
Miscellaneous.....	172
Small Claims.....	173
Bankruptcy and Foreclosure.....	174
Tax Liens and other Public Records	174
Credit Cards	175

Chapter 9: Statute of Limitations Chart176

Chapter 10: Glossary ...178

Introduction

Did you know that there are millions of errors in consumer credit reports?

There are accounts being reported incorrectly by date, spelling, name, status, age, and many other ways. Even valid accounts can be invalidated by a simple reporting error because credit bureaus, creditors, and collection agencies are held to strict federal and state laws regarding the way they report your credit. Simply challenging an item that you do not recall can also do the trick, when worded properly.

Our members have removed THOUSANDS of inquiries, late pays, charge-offs, collections, repossessions, judgments, tax liens, and bankruptcies. And it happens because debt collectors, creditors, and credit bureaus are notoriously bad at keeping records and at following the letter of the law. Even if one alphanumeric character is missing, you may have grounds for removal.

It is all about gaining leverage when a collector, a creditor, or a credit bureau is doing something wrong, and then using that as leverage for removal.

The credit bureaus must obey many laws, including the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA). And according to the FCRA, an item on your report MUST be removed if it is any of the following:

Inaccurate - maybe an item isn't yours, your high balance or account number is incorrect, a closed account is listed as open (or vice versa), the date of last activity is incorrect, and so on. There are MANY other factors as well.

Incomplete - a field is blank, a number or word is truncated, a number or letter is missing, false numbers or letters are added, or something is reported in the wrong field.

Unverifiable - you may want proof that a debt collector has the right to collect from you, and you come to find out that they don't have your original hand-signed contract on file anymore - paperwork gets lost. No proof of contract means no authority to report or collect from you. Or how about a late pay - does the creditor have proof in the form of your

Did you know?

The FTC conducted a study between 2002 and 2014 that determined about 40 million people across the United States had at least one error on one of their major credit reports. These errors affected their scores and cost the consumers thousands of dollars in higher interest rates on loans and other fees based on credit history.

canceled check? Doubtful.

We will show you how to look closely at your credit reports to reveal issues that may be hidden in plain

sight. There are dozens and dozens of issues to look for and several loopholes that can work in your favor.

It has been said that credit bureaus lean towards retaining incorrect data, rather than the other way around because they profit from the more data that they have. After all, they are essentially data brokers. So more data is worth more money, even if some of it is being incorrectly reported. It has also been said that finding incorrect data on your report could be enough to scare you into buying their identity theft monitoring products, which account for over 10% of their revenue.

The most important thing to know when you are working on fixing your credit is that you are dealing with large unorganized companies. Companies that are held accountable to timelines and requirements that

yet, many times the computerized methods fail to do their job properly.

As you will see when you begin the process, an alarming number of these companies have likely already broken the law in numerous ways as it relates to your own credit files.

You probably have items just sitting there, waiting to be removed. The creditors, collection agencies and credit bureaus just need a gentle nudge in the right direction. And thankfully, with the information in this book, you will become an informed consumer with the law on your side. You may find that many of your negatives can be removed in a relatively short period of time.

Using strategic correspondences and timelines will allow you to flip the script, and control your own destiny. No longer will you be subject to harassing phone calls, threatening letters, or worse. Ultimately, the goal is for you to become a confident individual who can walk into a bank, a car dealership, or a mortgage broker's office KNOWING you have a 700+ credit score with impeccable credit history.

With your credit score determining what you are allowed to buy, and at what interest rate, it is time to take full control. This is a serious business that should not be taken lightly.

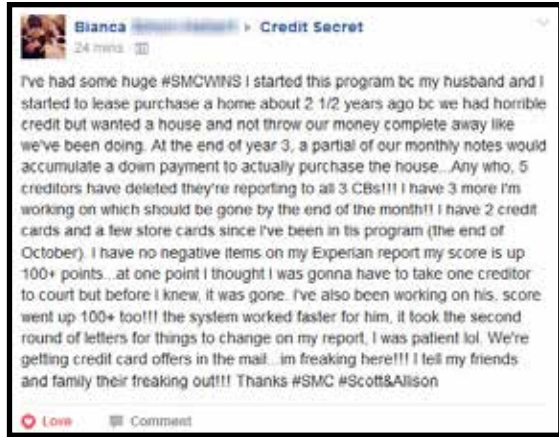
Many readers have made mistakes in the past, and that is perfectly okay because you are NOT your past.

Top 5 Creditor Violations

1. Call you before 8am or after 9pm
2. Contact a third party such as an employer or friend for any reason other than getting contact information.
3. Lie about the amount you owe
4. Threaten to garnish or sell your property
5. Give false credit information to a credit reporting company.

more often than not, they simply cannot meet. As you will learn, they have employed all sorts of interesting "automated" tactics in an attempt to deal with these deadlines. And

You are whatever you decide to be from this point forward. If you will accept that mentality and follow the steps it takes to achieve it, you may find yourself joining the “700 Club” much sooner than you ever imagined possible. And you will also arm yourself with the knowledge on how to avoid making costly credit mistakes in the future.



Please be sure to join our Facebook group using the link inside your member's area. Our Facebook group is full of thousands of people who have already improved their credit scores, as well as others who are on the same journey as you. The group is private to outsiders, and the positive energy inside is contagious. On any given day you will see folks showing pictures of themselves holding the keys to their dream car or house. We've received thousands of unsolicited testimonials and we love it!

We hope to see you in the group soon, reporting back on your own achievements!

Remember, no one is too far gone to benefit from this book. We've had members with credit scores under 400, so no matter your situation, we are here to help.

Whether it's a bankruptcy, charge-off, collection account, public record, tax lien, medical bill, student loan, etc - it doesn't matter...

ALL of these and more can be removed if there is any funny business going on. And chances are,

even if you think there isn't - there likely is. You just need to look deeper.

So with that said, let's get on with showing you how it's done!



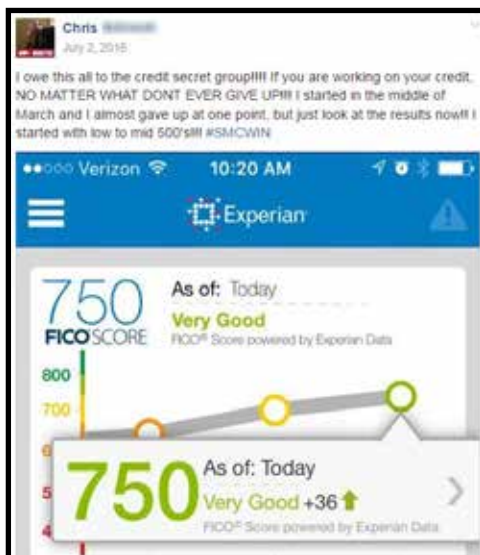
Important Notes

Please follow this method from the beginning of the book, step by step. Do not skip ahead or you risk missing a key element that could be the decisive factor in your success or failure.

Make sure you are well organized

We recommend actual file folders and keeping reminders on your cell phone or a calendar for very important cutoff dates. Keeping track of who got what, who replied or didn't, and when, is essential. We also provide a spreadsheet on your Credit Secret dashboard that is extremely helpful for tracking your letters and progress.

Your goal is to become "not worth it" for banks, credit bureaus, and collectors, by showing them that you



know the law AND that you are more organized than they are.

You will point out exactly how they broke the law. And they can either remove the derogatory credit they are

Please Note!

Our method is extremely effective and could potentially be used for "bad" by an unethical person. So before going any further, please promise that you will approach our system with INTEGRITY, and further agree that after your credit is fixed/improved, you will NOT go back into any old bad habits.

If you intend to purposely defraud a bank or financial institution by making false claims or applying for a credit card or loan that you know you cannot pay back, simply because you know you can re-use our method to potentially erase the item off of your credit report again, then we have a problem with that.

We do not want the method abused or used in any potentially fraudulent way. Please only proceed if you agree.

reporting, or pay damages - or both. Fortunately, with this guide you will quickly make it known to the banks, credit bureaus, and collections agencies that they will find it much easier to simply remove the negative item and leave you alone.

You may want to enlist another member, or a friend or family member to help you stay accountable. It is easy to get distracted with life and miss important action items in your credit repair process.

Smart Money Club

We highly recommend that you take advantage of the Smart Money Club VIP members area, as well as the private Facebook Group.

Thousands of members have taken the road you are about to embark on, and they can offer insight and advice. Our Facebook Group is a place of no judgment, positive energy, and support for your journey. We also post tips and tricks that come along as time goes on.

Your Credit Secrets Member Dashboard

The dashboard is located at creditsecret.org/login.

CREDIT SECRETS

First Things First! Get Inside Your Smart Money Club

Levin, your fastest path to success, will be getting inside your Smart Money Club group first. Our most successful members are inside, ready to help you start raising your scores right away! [Click Here Now To Get Started](#)

Get Started

CREDIT SECRETS
★★★★★
Press Play
More Than 500,000 Happy Members

Congratulations! Your brand new life begins today. All you have to do, is follow the steps, and soon you'll watch your financial life improve!

CLICK HERE TO GET YOUR UPDATED CREDIT REPORTS & SCORES FIRST

How To Make Money Helping Others Fix Their Credit
BONUS TRAINING Reveals How You Can Make Money Helping Others Improve Their Credit - Even If You Have No Credit Repair Experience At All
[Click Here Now To Get Started >>](#)

CREDIT SECRETS FAST-TRACK

The Automator Software Home Buyer's Secret

Secret Money Method Bonuses

Important Notes

You can request access to the Smart Money Club by visiting your dashboard and clicking Step #3 (see image below).

As soon as you're approved, make a post introducing yourself in the Facebook group along with the tag: **#Jumpstart**



If your name is different on Facebook than the name you used when you purchased our program, please contact support by emailing us at support@creditsecret.org and let us know so we can accept you.

We want to get to know you so we can help you on this journey! Approvals are usually very quick.

While you're waiting, send out the address correction letter you just created!



Pro Tip: Facebook Search

Do a search inside our Facebook group for "SMCWIN" and you will find the very best posts of people sharing exactly what they did to find success with our program.

Please also be sure to read our FAQ at the end of this guide. If you have a question that isn't answered there, you can submit a support ticket to support@creditsecret.org

And PLEASE... once you have achieved success... send us an update at the

HELP DESK or post it in the Facebook Group with the hashtag **#SMCWIN** (Smart Money Club Win). This helps to motivate others and allows you to pay it forward!



#SMCWIN !!

#SMCWIN !!

Amaya Lim celebrating success.
February 29 at 1:22pm · New York, NY

Look at this beautiful thing. Wow! My score went from low 800s to this amazing, almost 800 thing of beauty. And all it took was a few letters! Thank you to all in this group and of course Kelly Felix! The only thing may have a good score now, but the bridges I've burned from all the creditors I haven't paid back in the past will never give me credit again. On the upside, I get offer letters from AmEx every week now...

Scorecard: 778 Excellent

Next best information that you could report on this page, including an increase of your credit score and credit accounts. You are eligible to report information such as your reported credit and delinquency, late.

Account: Credit Inquiry: To Remove: Edit Account

Account Info: Credit Cards: Auto: Student: Other credit: Total accounts

David B
July 23 at 11:17am

Total of three collections accounts removed from the first letter. In 9 days I can send out the second batch of letters. This is great!

Account	Removed	Score	Status
ON CREDIT PAY	JAN 2018	11 AT 1 OVER	Scored!
CREDIT CARD	JAN 2018	OLDFORDS RESURANCE COOPARD	Scored!
STILLER BUD	JUL 2018	ST BISH METWORE	Scored!

Like Comment

Nancy Silva
May 13, 2014 · Palm Coast, FL

I've had 3 negatives taken OFF my credit report just with Letter #1!!
YES!! Taking 2nd actions on the others now 😊

Steve Solem
January 7

I still have to research this offer a bit, but I'm counting this as a nice, unexpected #smcwin 😊

VISA
No activation charge. No cash advance fee. No penalty rates. Just a credit card that's yours.

Good News for Steven Solem, you have been pre-approved for a Visa® credit card with no credit fees. Here's your offer:

- \$800 credit line
- You can DOUBLE your \$800 credit line to \$1,600 by making your minimum payment on time each month for the first 12 months your account is open. After you make your payments, the increase is automatic.
- Fees we charge: \$30 Annual Fee, Pay by Phone Fee, Late Fee
- Fees we won't charge: No Account Set-Up Fee, No Cash Advance Fee, No Processing Fee, No Over Limit Fee, No Additional Card Fee, No Returned Payment Fee

Offer expires soon — respond today!
www.DoubleYourLine.com

DOUBLE Your \$800 Credit Line to \$1,600

Double your credit line. Double your credit score. Double your credit life.

QR code and logo for Double Your Line.

Steve Solem · Credit Secret
November 15, 2016

So I woke up on my birthday yesterday to a nice score increase and a \$250 increase on a \$500 credit card line. Talk about a great birthday gift! My thanks to this awesome group for your constant advice and encouragement and esp to Kelly and Albin for this most incredible system. This has been a life changing year for me and I love seeing how much so many here have been helped by this tool every day.

10:26 AM 73% battery

Credit Karma

666 ↑
TransUnion
Updated on Nov 14
FAIR

691 ↑
Equifax
Updated on Nov 14
FAIR

Score range: 300 to 850

Get Your Credit Reports

Step 1. Where to Get Your 3 Credit Reports & Scores

With so many companies promising that they are the best resource for obtaining your credit reports and scores, it can be confusing.

Some offer scores, but no reports. Others offer reports, but no scores. Some use different scoring models - Vantage, FICO, proprietary, etc. And on top of that there are different versions of each, such as Vantage 3, or FICO 8.

But wait - there's more! To make matters worse, car dealerships may use FICO 7 mixed in with their own algorithm, and calculate what they call "car credit".

Other lenders may only use Transunion, while another may only use Equifax.

You could actually pull your credit score from 5 different places and get 5 different results!

That is why some of our members use multiple services to find out their starting scores.

Then you can continue to check back and see how your scores improve over time.

Here are the top 5 sources used by our members:

- <http://creditsecret.org/scores>
Gives you all 3 of your credit scores and reports from Transunion, Equifax and Experian every month - free to try. (our top choice)
- **Credit Karma** - Provides 2 scores & reports at no cost in exchange for viewing advertisements. (You need all 3 scores)
- **Experian 3 Bureau** - Provides all 3 credit reports & scores.
- **My Fico** - Provides all 3 credit reports & scores, but is very expensive.
- **Annual Credit Report** - Gives you all 3 credit reports for free, once per year, but no scores are given. (Do not dispute using any information from your Annual Credit Report. FCRA law allows the investigation period to automatically be 45 days. This throws off all dispute investigation 30-day timelines & causes letters sent on 31st day to be treated as "additional info" which can extend the initial investigation another 15 days!)



Analyze Your Credit Reports

Now that you are armed with a copy of your credit reports, the three items we are concerned with most are:

1. “Public Records”
2. “Derogatory Accounts”
3. “Unsatisfactory Accounts”

All of these are bad and in that order. Usually, your reports will be in sections that are actually titled. Some will say “Accounts in Good Standing”, “Negative Accounts”, “Derogatory Accounts”, etc.

Your credit history is the section that will make up the bulk of your report.

Typically when you have a public record, you will get inundated with letters from lawyers who promise to help you. The letters are usually from lawyers who purchased your information from the credit bureaus, in order to try to sell you their expensive services. Some will try to scare you. The more creative firms will send you letters that look handwritten. They aren't. Be very careful with these folks. If you would like help from an attorney we recommend Legal Shield - <http://www.creditsecret.org/legalshield>

Public Records	
This section includes public record items from local, state and federal courts and other public record sources that TransUnion may have obtained itself or through a third party vendor. In order to learn the identity of the third party vendor (if any) that collected the public record item(s) in this section, please visit http://www.konnect.com/legal/publicrecords .	
USBK COURT WESTERN	Docket #: (401 WEST TOWN STREET, ROOM 111, CHARLOTTE, NC 28202, (704) 350-7500)
Date Filed: 7/19/2017	Type: CHAPTER 7 BANKRUPTCY DISCHARGED
Date Paid: 7/16/2018	Responsibility: Contractually Liab. Debt
Date Updated: 7/5/2018	Court Type: US Bankruptcy Court
Plaintiff Attorney: [REDACTED]	
Estimated month and year that this item will be removed: 06/2022	

Each account listed will include a lot of information, from the creditor's name to the type of credit offered to the total amount owed to your history of repayment. If you've ever had issues paying off your debts, this is where they'll show up.

It will take time to go through your reports, but once you spot these sections, you will then look at each account reporting and analyze what is being listed for each account.

1) **Public records are the worst – these include bankruptcies, tax liens, judgments, and other items of “public record” that anyone can see.**

2) **Derogatory accounts are usually accounts that have been referred to a collection agency.**

These are the really annoying people who call you, and typically break the law in the process. By law they are not allowed to call you if you tell them, in writing, not to.

All they care about is money. BE CAREFUL if they want to negotiate, or if they promise you anything like removing an item in exchange for you making a payment or partial payment.

Many times they will take your money and never remove an item from your credit report. They have purchased

Portfolio Recovery Associates										Alverside Commerce Center 120 Corporate Blvd Ste 100 Aventura FL 33122-4962									
CAPIT -		New Opened		Credit Loss		Settle Dispute		Notice Received		Activity Description		Creditor Coordinator		Standing					
Item No	Balance	Interest	Principal	Settle	Dispute	Settle	Dispute	Settle	Dispute	Settle	Dispute	Settle	Dispute	Settle	Dispute				
1111320219	\$714	\$714	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0				
Collection Account Open																			
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION																			

your debt from the original creditor for pennies on the dollar, so they will try to recoup those funds, and then they'll disappear.

We will tell you exactly how to deal with them later in this book.

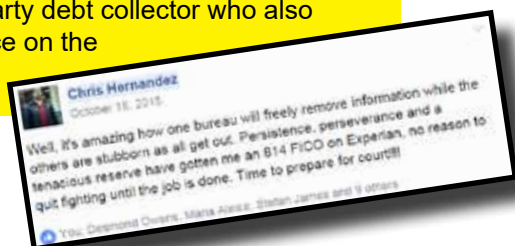
3) **Unsatisfactory accounts are accounts that have “late pays”.** A late pay is where you are (or were) 30-180 days late on a payment, but have not yet been referred to a collection agency.

Now first things first, do not get upset or emotional over what might seem like a mountain of horrible information. It is well-known that credit reports contain errors over 50% of the time. You may see items that are absolutely false. You may even see some ridiculous collection account you've never heard of, from many years ago. You will soon be able to exploit their wrongdoings to your advantage.

Date opened Feb 2011	First reported Mar 2011	Recent balance Not reported	Payment history <table><tr><th></th><th>Jan</th><th>Feb</th><th>Mar</th><th>Apr</th><th>May</th><th>Jun</th><th>Jul</th><th>Aug</th><th>Sep</th><th>Oct</th><th>Nov</th><th>Dec</th></tr><tr><td>2017</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td></tr><tr><td>2016</td><td colspan="12">Full Year - In Good Standing</td></tr><tr><td>2015</td><td colspan="12">Full Year - In Good Standing</td></tr><tr><td>2014</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td></tr><tr><td>2013</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td></tr><tr><td>2012</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td></tr><tr><td>2011</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td><td>On</td></tr></table>		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	2017	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	2016	Full Year - In Good Standing												2015	Full Year - In Good Standing												2014	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	2013	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	2012	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	2011	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	On
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Address ID # [REDACTED]	Terms Not reported	Status Paid, Closed																																																																																																									
Original creditor MERRICK BANK	Monthly payment Not reported	Comment Account closed at consumer's request. This item was updated from our processing of your dispute in Jun 2017																																																																																																									
Credit card	Credit limit or original amount \$1,000	Date of Status Jun 2017																																																																																																									
Responsibility Individual	High balance \$1,302																																																																																																										

Did You Know?

New Case Law: Tyler Cook v. Mountain America Federal Credit Union, et. al. (Aug. 3, 2018) Credit Union's reporting of balance owed on original debt is sufficiently pled as inaccurate (and duplicative) credit reporting when such debt is turned over to third-party debt collector who also reports the same debt balance on the consumer's credit file.



Sample Credit Report

EQUIFAX 3 in 1 Sample Credit Report

Personal Information

Registration Information

Name: Stephen X. Smith
 Address: 123 Main Street, Anywhere, VA 12345
 Social Security Number: 022-22-2222

Identification Information

	Equifax	Experian	TransUnion
	Reported	Reported	Reported
Name:	JOHN Q PUBLIC	JOHN Q PUBLIC	JOHN Q PUBLIC
Social Security Number:	022-22-2222	022-22-2222	022-22-2222
Age or Date of Birth:	03/1958	03/1958	03/1958

Address Information

	Equifax	Experian	TransUnion
	Reported	Reported	Reported
Address:	123 MAIN ST	123 MAIN ST	123 MAIN ST
	ANYWHERE, VA 22222	ANYWHERE, VA 22222	ANYWHERE, VA 22222
Date Reported:	03/1999	01/2002	10/1999
	Reported	Reported	Reported
Address:	321 EXIT ST	321 EXIT ST	321 EXIT ST
	SOMEWHERE, VA 22222	SOMEWHERE, VA 22222	SOMEWHERE, VA 22222
Date Reported:	11/1998	12/2001	09/1999

Employment Information

	Equifax	Experian	TransUnion
	Reported	Reported	Not Reported
Employer:	ABC CORP	ABC CORP	
Address:			
Date Reported:	02/2001	02/2001	

Account Information

American Express

Sometimes an account is only listed with one credit bureau. In the case below, a collection agency has listed the debt.

	Equifax	TransUnion	Experian
Account Type:		Open	
Account Number:		393XXXX	
Payment Responsibility:		Individual	
Date Opened:		03/2014	
Balance Date:		08/2015	
Balance Amount:		\$2,789	
Monthly Payment:			
High/Limit:		\$2,789	
Account Status:		Collection	
Past Due Amount:		\$0	
Comments:		COLLECTION ACCOUNT ORIGINAL CREDITOR: SONS OF ARLEY HOME IMPROVEMENT ACCT INFO DISPUTED MEETS FCRA	

Chapter 1: Getting Started

This is a medical collection showing on a single credit bureau report.

Date Reported: Feb 15, 2017

Original Creditor Name	BERKS CREDIT & COLLECTIONS	Balance Date	Feb 15, 2017
Date Assigned	Apr 28, 2014	Account Designator Code	INDIVIDUAL_ACCOUNT
Original Amount Owed	\$751	Account Number	
Amount	\$751	Creditor Classification	Medical or Health Care
Status Date	Feb 15, 2017	Last Payment Date	
Status	UNPAID	Date of First Delinquency	Feb 27, 2013

Comments
Consumer disputes this account information
Medical

CREDIT ABC BANK

PO Box 15847
Las Vegas, NV-891938873

Equifax Account with Late Payment

Account Number:	444459811989XXXX	Current Status:	PAYS AS AGREED
Account Owner:	Individual Account.	High Credit:	\$ 20,094
Type of Account :	Revolving	Credit Limit:	\$ 25,000
Term Duration:		Terms Frequency:	Monthly (due every month)

Date Opened:	06/21/2006	Balance:	\$ 2,078
Date Reported:	08/04/2016	Amount Past Due:	
Date of Last Payment:	07/2016	Actual Payment Amount:	\$ 400
Scheduled Payment Amount:	\$ 325	Date of Last Activity:	08/2016
Date Major Delinquency First Reported:		Months Reviewed:	90
Creditor Classification:		Activity Description:	N/A
Charge Off Amount:		Deferred Payment Start Date:	
Balloon Payment Amount:		Balloon Payment Date:	
Date Closed:		Type of Loan:	Credit Card
Date of First Delinquency:	APRIL 2016		
Comments:			

In derogatory status because of late payment.

81-Month Payment History

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2016	*	*	*	30	*	*	*					

CAPITAL ONE			
PO Box 30281 Salt Lake City, UT-841300281 (800) 695-6950			
Equifax Account in Good Standing			
Account Number:	486235288678XXXX	Current Status:	PAYS AS AGREED
Account Owner:	Individual Account.	High Credit:	\$ 443
Type of Account:	Revolving	Credit Limit:	\$ 500
Term Duration:		Terms Frequency:	Monthly (due every month)
Date Opened:	02/02/2002	Balance:	\$ 475
Date Reported:	08/27/2016	Amount Past Due:	
Date of Last Payment:	07/2016	Actual Payment Amount:	
Scheduled Payment Amount:	\$ 43	Date of Last Activity:	08/2016
Date Major Delinquency First Reported:		Months Reviewed:	99
Creditor Classification:		Activity Description:	N/A
Charge Off Amount:		Deferred Payment Start Date:	
Balloon Payment Amount:		Balloon Payment Date:	
Date Closed:		Type of Loan:	Credit Card
Date of First Delinquency:	N/A		
Comments:			
Note: Incomplete Account Number			
81-Month Payment History			

Not every credit bureau will list an account the same.

Revolving Account 7 of 17				
Profile	Equifax	TransUnion	Experian	
COMPANY	Credit USA Bank	Credit USA Bank	Credit USA Bank	
LOAN TYPE	Credit Card	Credit Card	Credit Card	
ACCOUNT NUMBER	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	
ACCOUNT HOLDER	Individual	Individual Account	Individual	
DATE OPENED	Jun, 2006	Jun, 2006	Jun, 2006	
Status	Equifax	TransUnion	Experian	
STATUS DATE	Oct, 2016	Oct, 2016	Oct, 2016	
CONDITION	Open	Open	Open	
LAST ACTIVITY	Oct, 2016	Sep, 2016	Not Available	
BALANCE	\$1,921	\$1,921	\$1,921	
STATUS	Pays account as agreed	Paid or paying as agreed	Current account was 30 days past due date	

Payment Timeline

Even though every Credit Bureau shows the late payment, not every status is derogatory. This will result in different scores across each of the three.

Equifax																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																						</
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Chapter 1: Getting Started

The example below shows how a payment history can be listed.

Status:

Transferred,closed. \$387 written off.

Date Opened:

11/2005

Date of Status:

12/2007

Reported Since:

11/2005

Last Reported Date:

12/2007

Type:

Charge Card

Terms:

N/A

Monthly Payment:

\$0

Responsibility:

Individual

Credit Limit:

\$266

High Balance:

\$387

Recent Balance:

N/A

Recent Payment:

N/A

Creditor's Statement:

Purchased by another lender.

Payment history legend

OK Current/Terms of agreement met	VS Voluntarily surrendered
30 Account 30 days past due	R Repossession
60 Account 60 days past due	PBC Paid by creditor
90 Account 90 days past due	IC Insurance claim
120 Account 120 days past due	G Claim filed with government
150 Account 150 days past due	D Defaulted on contract
180 Account 180 days past due	C Collection
CRD Creditor received deed	CO Charge off
FS Foreclosure proceedings started	CLS Closed
F Foreclosed	ND No data for this time period

Payment History:

2007												2006											
DEC	NOV	OCT	SEP	AUG	JUL	JUN	MAY	APR	MAR	FEB	JAN	DEC	NOV	OCT	SEP	AUG	JUL						
CLS	ND	CO	CO	CO	CO	CO	CO	150	120	90	60	30	OK	OK	30	OK	OK						
2005																							
JUN	MAY	APR	MAR	FEB	JAN	DEC	NOV																
ND	ND	ND	OK	OK	OK	OK	OK																

Account History:

Charge Off as of May 2007 to Oct 2007

150 days past due as of Apr 2007

120 days past due as of Mar 2007

90 days past due as of Feb 2007

60 days past due as of Jan 2007

30 days past due as of Dec 2006, Sep 2006



Michael

October 24, 2016

This program is the freakin bomb

Credit Score Differences

When you start pulling your credit reports, you may find that your credit scores vary among different credit monitoring sites. So why the difference in scoring among monitoring sites and bureaus?

Credit Bureau Score Differences

Let's first address differences amongst the bureau scores. The reason for the differing scores is due to what is actually being reported on your credit report. The credit data that comprises the reports for Experian, Equifax and TransUnion are likely different. One bureau could be reporting more negative information than the other two; for example, a judgment, a collection account, late payment, etc that is not being reported to the other bureaus. Every bureau does not always report the exact same information. Additionally, a lower score could be the result of erroneous or incorrect information on your report due to human error, computer error, or even possibly identity theft in extreme cases. This is why it is critical to keep up with your report on a monthly basis.

Credit Monitoring Site Score Differences

Understanding the difference in scores on different credit monitoring sites is very important. There are many sites online that offer credit monitoring services and/or provide your credit report (free & paid).

One thing to keep in mind is that all of these sites are using different scoring systems and algorithms. Your credit scores (no matter what monitoring system you access) are calculated by the categories of payment history, utilization, length of credit history, new credit and credit mix or versatility. Different scoring algorithms place more or less weight on each of these categories causing the scores to differ.

FICO® Scoring

The most important scores that you want to have access to are your FICO® scores. FICO® scores are the most widely used credit scores, created by the Fair Isaac Corporation. These scores are used by top lenders to help make credit-related decisions that affect all of your major purchases, from mortgage loans to credit cards and everything in between. It is important to understand that not every credit score offered for sale online is a FICO® Score. In fact, many of the scores you receive online do not use the true FICO® scoring model. Although they may not be true FICO®, they are great for monitoring your credit report itself, and to get a general idea of your scores.

Facts About FICO Scores

FICO scores range from 300 to 850, and they indicate whether or not you have a good credit history.

On average, any FICO score over 700 indicates that you have a good credit history.

What Factors Into FICO Scores?

The majority of the score is calculated based on your payment history and it counts for 35% of the rating score. How much you are currently in debt accounts for 30% of that score. The length



of credit history is weighed into the calculation by 15% of the calculated score. New credit and a credit mix both weigh in at 10% of the overall FICO score.

1. Accounts Owed

This refers to how much money you currently owe. If you have a lot of debt, it doesn't necessarily mean that you will have a lower FICO score. It does take

into account the ratio of money owed in comparison to the amount of credit available. For example, if you take out a \$10,000 Line of Credit, and you've extended that credit to its fullest, you will have a lower FICO score than a person who took out \$100,000 but has only utilized a small portion of it.

2. Payment History

This is determinant on whether or not you pay your credit account bills on time. Each line of credit has scheduled payments and credit reports show whether or not payments have been late being received.



Pro Tip: What is 30% Utilization?

Typically, credit utilization is calculated based on your total outstanding balances compared to your total credit limit across all of your cards, and lines of credit. However, some scoring models penalize you for exceeding 30% utilization on any single card or line of credit.

For example: If you have a credit card with a \$1000 limit, you would try to keep the balance on it between \$100-\$300.

The best rule of thumb is to keep your balance below 30% on all of your cards at all times to kill two birds with one stone.

The days that appear on credit reports indicate whether you were 30, 60, 90, or 120 or more days late on payment toward those accounts.

3. Credit History Length

Typically, the longer a person has had credit, the better their scores. However, it is possible that someone with a shorter credit history has a better score if they have paid on time and have not maxed out all of their credit line accounts. FICO scores depend on how long your oldest account has been open as well as the age of the most recent credit line account and then considers the average overall. This is why closing old unused accounts can actually hurt your score.



4. New Credit

Recently opened accounts are considered new credit. When you open several new credit accounts over a short length of time, this shows up as a potential credit risk. As a result, there is a lower FICO score. However, after some time has passed with a good payment history, the score will rise.

5. Credit Mix

A portion of the FICO score takes into account the various types of credit accounts you have. Individuals with a good mix of credit cards, vehicle loans, mortgages, charge cards at retailers, or other financial loans will see a benefit in their FICO score.



Why Do Some FICO Scores Go Up or Down?

Sometimes a FICO score fluctuates a bit, and that is perfectly okay. If you monitor it daily, you could make yourself go a little crazy! A credit score is not a fixed rate of measurement. It all depends on how you use your credit and when and how it is regularly updated. Your scores will also fluctuate between different Credit Score monitoring services. This is usually due to when they receive your data from the furnisher.

For example, if a credit bureau pulls your account information on the 29th of the month, and your balance



is high, and then you pay off the balance the next day on the 30th, your score will be lower than if you had paid the card off on the 28th. In that case, you would have to wait up to one month to see the score benefit.

Going on a shopping spree one month and using up a lot of credit could cause a FICO score to drop. However, if spending behaviors change and less is used on the credit account,



a credit score could jump. It is more than a 30 percent balance of a recommended by financial experts credit limit that you should try to avoid carrying

The various models of FICO can get somewhat complicated

Experian, TransUnion, and Equifax already have different scores, and each version of FICO has other models. As of this writing, there are approximately 19 different scoring versions.



In 1989, FICO first introduced a scaling model that ranged a score from 300 to 850. Since then, there have been significant revisions made to the FICO scoring model which occurred in 1995, 1998, 2004, 2008 and 2014. Each year that it changed meant that a different formula was used, which also changed a FICO score. Lenders no longer use the 1995 revision, but some other lenders may still use the older versions.

The editions are named for the year they came out, and it is FICO 98, FICO 04, FICO 08 (now known as FICO 8 without the zero), and then FICO Score 9 is the model that was released in 2014.

Each has customizable versions to determine potential credit risks. If a person is looking for an auto loan, a different model may be used in the calculation of the FICO score than if insurance information was being used. These are called industry option versions, and range from 250 to 900, and are not entirely comparable to the more widely used FICO calculations.

Every credit agency uses their customized version of each FICO variation model. This is why a consumer's score may vary even when all user data is the same. The various models can become a bit confusing and unexplainable without going into significant full detail. But what a consumer needs to know is that there are different versions, and they will show different FICO scores.

All you really need to know is that no matter what scoring model is used by a particular lender, this book is intended to help you get your score as high as possible.

The Credit Bureaus



Consumer Small Business Business About Experian Consumer Support Credit Advice Credit Store

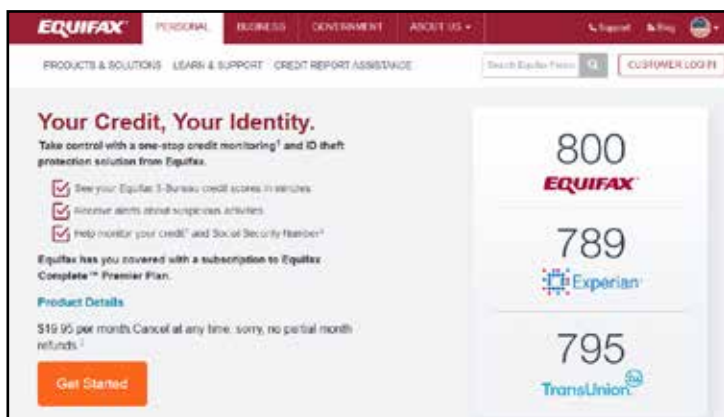
experian. Products Credit Report Assistance Credit Education Credit Advice Existing Members

What's your FICO® Credit Score?

Find out now when you check your Credit Report for \$1

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- ✓ 90% of top lenders use FICO Scores
- ✓ Toll-free support available 7 days a week

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\$19.95 per month. Cancel at any time. Sorry, no partial month refunds.⁴

Get Started

800
EQUIFAX

789
Experian

795
TransUnion



PERSONAL BUSINESS ABOUT BLOG CUSTOMER SUPPORT MEMBER LOGIN ENGLISH

TransUnion

Credit Report Products Credit Education Credit Report Assistance Credit Q

Be in the know with TransUnion®

Get your Credit Score & Report

Don't worry. Checking your score won't lower it.

SEE YOURS NOW

Already a Member? Log in now

Offer Details: Your TransUnion Score & Report are available as part of our subscription credit monitoring service. You will be billed at the low monthly cost of \$19.95 per month, which is 50% off of the regular price (plus tax where applicable).

We have deliberately omitted the phone numbers and websites of each credit bureau above because we do not recommend calling or challenging/disputing online in the beginning. We have seen the most success stories come from members who contact the bureaus by certified mail.

Besides, if you call, it is typically very difficult to speak to someone in the USA.

Certified mail gives you documented proof of exactly when they received your letter, and then the legal clock starts ticking on them.

It is VERY important that you keep very close track of the dates as you begin this process.

Once you download your latest 3 credit reports and scores, you need to print them out. This will give you hard copies that are dated. The date will be a major factor you may be able to use against the credit bureaus to get leverage and removals.

Just keep that in mind.

The ONLY reason you will NOT succeed, is due to inaction. If you follow the guide exactly, you will do great. If not, you won't. Just do the work! It's that simple.



Do not contact the Credit Bureaus until you have read through this guide completely. Later on in this book we will share their phone and fax numbers for the purposes of dealing with false names, addresses, workplaces and inquiries.



Experian
P.O. Box 4000
Allen, TX 75013



Equifax Credit Information Services, Inc.
P.O. Box 740256
Atlanta, GA 30374



TransUnion, LLC
P.O. Box 2000
Chester, PA 19016

Did you know?

Postal mail is GREAT! If you file a paper tax return by mail, you are much less likely to be audited than those who e-file? – I know it's off topic, but that is something to think about – okay back to repairing your credit!

#Jumpstart Your Success

How to Update Personal Information on Your Credit Report

Removing old addresses and incorrect personal information such as variations of your name, social security number, birth date, telephone numbers, and employers could boost your score up dozens of points and increase the chance to remove any negative accounts associated with those old addresses.

Review your reports to determine all your positive accounts vs negative accounts. It's best to always contact creditors that are reporting positive accounts and update your information directly with them prior to removing old addresses from your reports. Even if the account is closed and in good standing, just request to update your contact information either by phone or letter. If you remove old addresses that are being reported by old positive accounts you could potentially lose those positive reporting lines of credit thus decreasing the age of your credit profile. Updating your address on those positive accounts first can really help your credit profile!

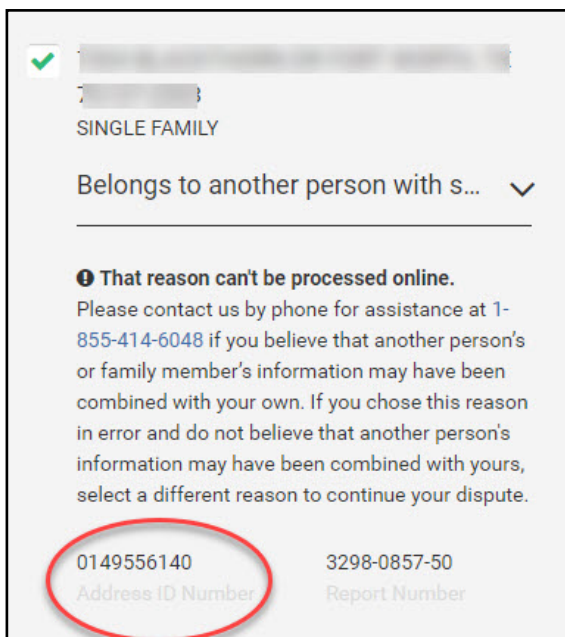
Insert SMC win testimonial post of 77 point increase from removing

personal info

This is a simple trick that will improve the odds of your letters working better. You will only find this information on your Experian credit report that comes directly from Experian or by going through the online dispute process but do not completing the dispute online.

Follow along and customize yours so you can send it out right away, and be on your way to your first #SMCWIN!

Look at “**Old Address Removal Image 1**”. You’ll see a red circle that says “Address Identification Number”. This is one of the ways the credit bureaus verify your account.



✓ [Redacted]

[Redacted]

SINGLE FAMILY

Belongs to another person with s... ▼

ⓘ That reason can't be processed online.

Please contact us by phone for assistance at 1-855-414-6048 if you believe that another person's or family member's information may have been combined with your own. If you chose this reason in error and do not believe that another person's information may have been combined with yours, select a different reason to continue your dispute.

0149556140 3298-0857-50

Address ID Number Report Number

Old Address Removal Image 1

Now look at “**Old Address Removal Image 2**”.

As you can clearly see, the bank has the SAME address Identification number. If there is a mismatch, you are more likely to get the derogatory account removed.

CAPITAL ONE Partial account # 5..... PO BOX		
Date opened	First reported	Recent balance
Nov 2014	Dec 2014	\$0 as of Feb 2018
Address ID #	Terms	Status
0149556140	Not reported	Open.
Type	Monthly payment	By May 2023, this
Credit card	\$3	account is scheduled to
Responsibility	Credit limit or original	go to a positive status.
Individual	amount	Comment
		Account previously in
	High balance	dispute - investigation

Old Address Removal Image 2

Also, it is important to note that the entire disputing/challenging process is computerized. There are no human eyes that read your letters. In fact, your dispute/challenge letters are scanned by a computer, and a highly advanced algorithm attempts to break it down into a two-digit code through a system called e-Oscar. So if the computer notices a mismatch in the address ID, then you are also more likely to get the account removed. The same goes for your name. You may notice that your report has several versions of your

name, last name first, middle initial, middle name, no middle name, etc. If you remove all of the variations, you are more likely to get the derogatory information off your report.

To update/remove change an address and other personal information,

you should mail a simple certified letter. It is not required that you send the personal information update letters certified but we suggest it because you are sending your sensitive

information through the mail. Be sure to include a recent utility bill showing your address, as well as a copy of your driver's license and your Social Security Card. If you don't have a utility bill, you can use a pay stub, vehicle insurance or registration, cell phone bill, etc. Equifax is the only bureau that will accept fax for personal information updates so we've included their fax number below. Additionally, if you want to cover your signature on your ID you can certainly do so.



Pro Tip: Credit Bureau Being Stubborn?

If a credit bureau is being tough and not removing any of the personal information you'd like to remove, consider going to a UPS store or any other notary. Take a bill with your current address, along with your driver's license, and get both notarized. Send this information to the bureaus and watch the old addresses disappear.

Once you have sent a personal information update letter, if your requested changes were not made, you can try to call each of the bureaus regarding this issue only.

Make sure you do NOT initiate any account disputes, just your personal information updates.

If the bureau(s) tells you the information is linked to items reporting on your credit report, you can move on to the next section of this book. You can come back to correcting your personal information after the items the bureau(s) said were reporting the personal information are updated or deleted from your disputes.

Fax numbers

Equifax: 888-826-0598

TransUnion: No longer accepts faxes. You will have to mail in the documentation for personal information changes.

Experian: Experian no longer accepts faxes. You will have to mail in the documentation for personal information changes.

Change of Address Letter

There are two simple & free online faxing websites you can use:

<http://www.HelloFax.com>

<https://www.faxzero.com>

If you get a busy signal, try again at another time - perhaps later in the evening.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Some people have also had positive results with Experian by uploading the letter to www.experian.com/upload

Here is a simple example letter you can send:

Date

Credit Bureau Name

Credit Bureau Address

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to update/correct my personal information on file with your company.

Please update my address to: [Insert Address]

Please update my name to: [Full Name]

My only social security number is: [123-45-6789]

My only and correct date of birth is: [01-01-19XX]

My only employer is: [ABC Supply Company]

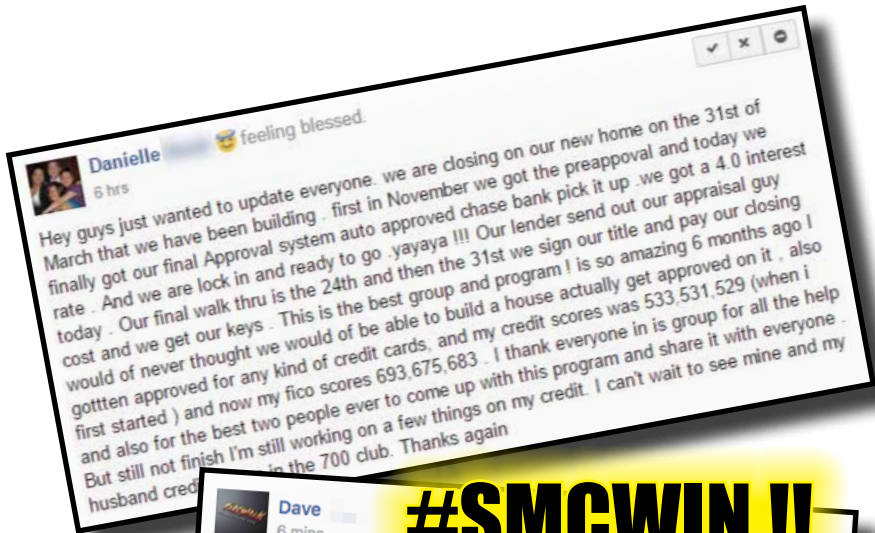
I do not wish to have any telephone numbers on my report.

Please remove all the other addresses off my report, as they are not deliverable to me by the U.S. post office, and they are not reportable as per the FCRA, since they are inaccurate.

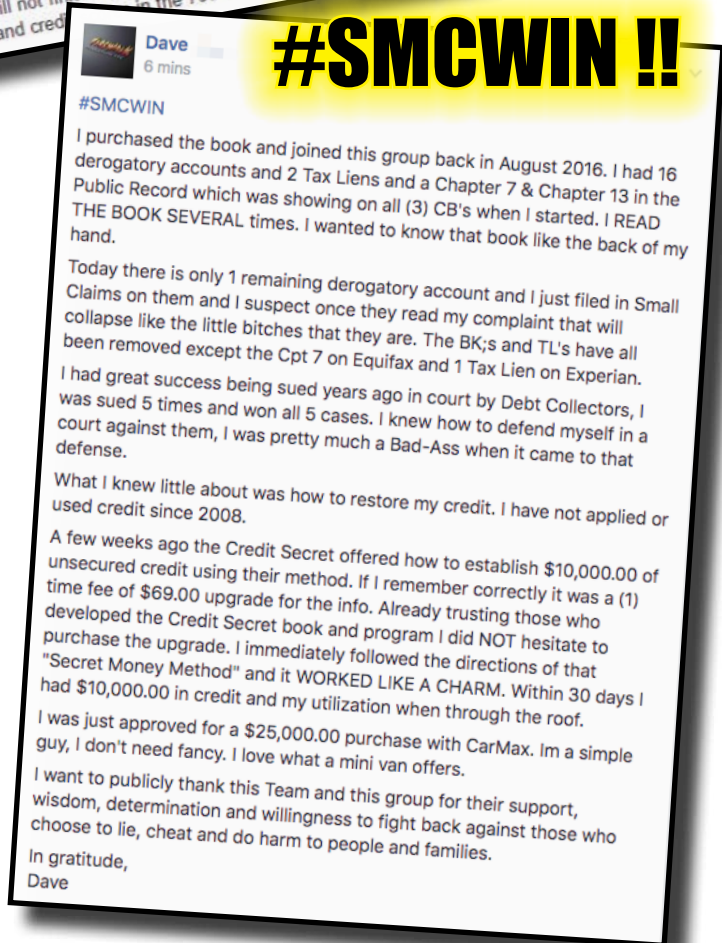
Sincerely,

Name

*Enc. Driver License, SSN Card,
and Proof of Residence*



#SMCWIN !!



How to Remove Inquiries from Your Credit Report

Did you know that hard inquiries, where you were denied credit, can be removed from your credit report and raise your credit score?

To understand how this works, first, we need to talk about the difference between a hard inquiry and a soft inquiry.

NOTE: Do not dispute an inquiry where credit was granted or they can close the account.

new credit card, store loan, car loan, mortgage, or personal loan. Every time you get a hard inquiry, your score can drop by a few points.

The number of new credit inquiries account for about 10% of your credit score calculation.

That said, hard inquiries only damage your credit score temporarily. Inquiries that reach two years old don't affect your credit score and are required to automatically be removed from your credit report. Inquiries over six months old have one-half of the effect on your score compared to recent inquiries. This is why you should never apply for any new credit cards

if you intend to get a major loan like a mortgage within a six month period. But you can remove inquiries that are not tied to open, positive reporting accounts, prior to the 2 years aging off time period. If you dispute an inquiry tied to an open account, the creditor could close the account thinking it was fraudulently obtained.

A soft inquiry (also known as a "soft pull") does not damage your credit score. A soft inquiry is made on your credit report when you pull your own report.

Some companies pull a soft inquiry on your credit file to



Pro Tip: Soft Inquiries

In general, if an online store only asks for the last 4 digits of your social security number, they are likely doing a soft inquiry. But we'll talk later about which specific companies are best for this method

Hard inquiries (also known as "hard pulls") appear on your credit report when a company pulls your credit report and evaluates it. This happens when you apply for new credit: a



see if you're worthy of them sending you pre-approved credit card offers. Banks and other companies can also pull a soft inquiry to confirm your identity. Your prospective employer or landlord may pull a soft inquiry to assess your financial profile and risk. Credit card companies routinely perform a soft inquiry to check your credit report.

Lastly, when you begin disputing inquiries, the credit bureaus will automatically add a fraud alert to your file. This alert does not hurt your credit or your credit score.

It is a protective measure put in place because

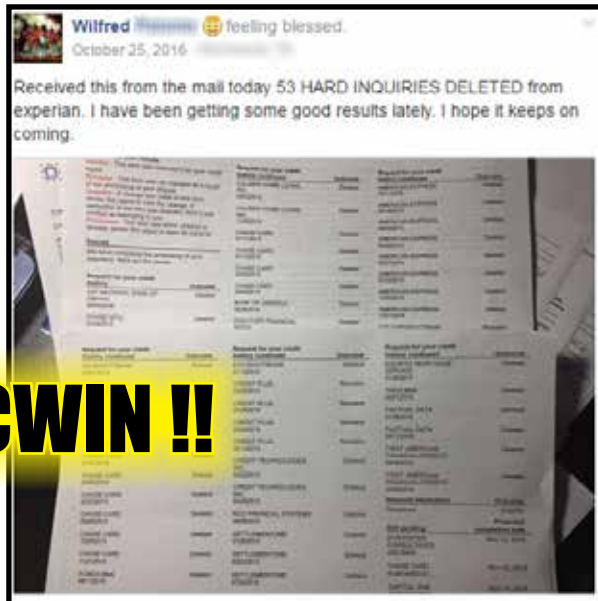
your Inquiry Removal letters are saying you do not recall authorizing the inquiry. The fraud alerts are to prevent anyone from opening accounts in your name without the potential new creditor directly confirming with you (usually by phone) that the new credit request is not being fraudulently obtained.

If you do not want the fraud alert on your file, you can simply call the bureaus and ask to have the alert removed.

Did You Know?

You can add all "denial" inquiries to one letter. If you're using the Automater and have more than 3 inquiries, add the rest of your inquiries before you generate the final PDF.

#SMCWIN !!



Inquiry Removal Letters

Inquiry Removal Letter 1

Send to the credit bureau to dispute unauthorized inquiries on your credit report.

Your Name

Your Address

Credit Bureau Name

Credit Bureau Address

Date

RE: Last 4 of SSN: 0000

To Whom It May Concern,

While checking my most recent credit report, I noticed credit inquiries that I did not authorize, made by the following companies:

Inquiries:

1. (insert company name & inquiry date)

2. (insert company name & inquiry date)

3. (insert company name & inquiry date)

I did not authorize anyone employed by these companies to make any inquiry and view my credit report. This is a violation of the Fair Credit Reporting Act Section 1681b(c) and a serious breach of my privacy rights.

Please validate this information with these companies and provide me with copies of any documentation associated with these accounts bearing my signature, authorizing an inquiry. In the absence of any such documentation bearing my signature, I formally request that these fraudulent inquiries be immediately deleted from the credit file that you maintain under my Social Security number.

Please note that you have 30 days to complete this investigation, as per the Fair Credit Reporting Act section 611.

My contact information is as follows:

Your Name (printed or typed, not signed)

Address

Inquiry Removal Letter 2

Send to the credit bureau if you receive no reply or they say the inquiries were “verified” from Inquiry Letter 1.

Your Name

Your Address

Credit Bureau Name

Credit Bureau Address

Date

RE: Last 4 of SSN: 0000

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is a follow up to my original letter dated (insert date of original letter) regarding an inaccuracy in your credit reporting. Specifically as it relates to credit inquiries that I did not authorize, made by the following companies:

Inquiries:

1. (insert company name & inquiry date)

2. (insert company name & inquiry date)

3. (insert company name & inquiry date)

I did not authorize anyone employed by these companies to make any inquiry and view my credit report. This is a violation of the Fair Credit Reporting Act Section 1681b(c) and a serious breach of my privacy rights.

I am making this final goodwill gesture to allow you to correct your erroneous reporting, and I am maintaining a careful record of my communications with you for the purpose of filing a complaint with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the Attorney General’s office, should you continue in your non-compliance. I further remind you that, as in *Wenger v. Trans Union Corp.*, No. 95-6445 (C.D.Cal. Nov. 14, 1995), you may be liable for your willful non-compliance.

Failure to respond satisfactorily within 30 days of receipt of this certified letter may result in a small claims action against your company, seeking \$1,000 per violation for:

(Letter continued on next page)

Chapter 1: Getting Started

(Inquiry removal letter #2 continued)

- 1.) Defamation
- 2.) Negligent Enablement of Identity Fraud
- 3.) Violations of the Fair Credit Reporting Act

My contact information is as follows:

Your Name (printed or typed, not signed)

Address

P.S. Please be aware that dependent upon your response, I may be detailing any potential issues with your company via an online public press release, including documentation of any potential small claims action.

CC: Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

CC: Attorney General's Office

CC: Better Business Bureau



Requesting the Removal of Hard Inquiries Sent Directly to Creditor

The Fair Credit Reporting Act allows only authorized inquiries to appear on the consumer credit report. You can challenge whether the inquiring creditor had proper authorization to pull your credit file. Keep a copy for your files and send the letters registered mail.

Inquiry Removal Letter 3

Your Name

Your Address

Creditor Name

Creditor Address

Date

Re: Unauthorized Credit Inquiry

To Whom It May Concern,

I recently received a copy of my credit report. The credit report showed a credit inquiry by your company that I do not recall authorizing. I understand that you shouldn't be allowed to put an inquiry on my credit file unless I have authorized it. Please have this inquiry removed from my credit file immediately because it is making it very difficult for me to acquire credit.

I have sent this letter certified mail because I need your prompt response to this issue. Please be so kind as to forward me documentation that you've had the unauthorized inquiry removed.

If you find that I am remiss, and you do have my authorization to inquire into my credit report, then please send me proof of this. Otherwise, please note that I am reserving the right to take civil action if necessary.

Thank you,

Your Name (printed or typed, not signed)

The Laws on Your Side When Dealing With Creditors, Collection Agencies and Credit Bureaus

There are VERY SPECIFIC laws on your side. They are hidden in between hundreds of pages of legal language.

1. Fair Debt Collection Practices Act

The Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (FDCPA) – this document explains the rules and laws that collection agencies are required to abide by.

Our favorite part of the FDCPA is:

FDCPA Section 807(8) (this law is for collection agencies)

§ 807. False or misleading representations [15 USC 1692e]

(8) Communicating or threatening to communicate to any person credit information which is known or which should be known to be false, including the failure to communicate that a disputed debt is disputed.

You can see the entire document here:
<https://www.ftc.gov/enforcement/rules/rulemaking-regulatory-reform-proceedings/fair-debt-collection-practices-act-text>

2. Fair Credit Reporting Act

The Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) – this document explains the rules and laws that the credit bureaus and creditors/banks have to abide by. This is what we will refer to when dealing with Experian, TransUnion, and Equifax.

Our favorite part of the FCRA is:

FCRA Section 623(a)(3) (this law is for creditors/banks)

§ 623. Responsibilities of furnishers of information to consumer reporting agencies [15 U.S.C. § 1681s-2] (a) (3) Duty to provide notice of dispute. If the completeness or accuracy



of any information furnished by any person to any consumer reporting agency is disputed to such person by a consumer, the person may not furnish the information to any consumer reporting agency without notice that such information is disputed by the consumer.



- failure to post payments and other credits, such as returns;
- failure to send bills to your current address – provided the creditor receives your change of address, in writing, at least

You can see the entire document here: <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/sites/default/files/articles/pdf/pdf-0111-fair-credit-reporting-act.pdf>

Additional Laws to consider for reporting errors are:

3. Fair Credit Billing Act

The Fair Credit Billing Act (FCBA) - For disputes about “billing errors.”

For example:

- charges that list the wrong date or amount;
- math errors;

20 days before the billing period ends; and

- charges for which you ask for an explanation or written proof of purchase along with a claimed error or request for clarification.

You can see the entire document here: <https://www.ftc.gov/sites/default/files/fcb.pdf>

4. Metro 2 Compliance

Metro 2 Compliance - Standardizes the information reported to all 3 credit bureaus so that furnishers of credit information to bureaus must use the proper formatting in a form that contains 67 fields. As an example there is a field called 17a, which on your credit report would equal the section that says



“account status”. If you really want a data furnisher to be scared of you as an “informed consumer”, you may reference Metro 2 when a field is missing or being reported incorrectly. and really blow their minds!

You can find out more here: <https://www.collect.org/cv11/Help/metro2formatbasesegment.html>.

And you can see where the credit bureaus settled with the Attorney General of NY, agreeing to terms of Metro 2 here: <https://ag.ny.gov/pdfs/CRA%20Agreement%20Fully%20Executed%203.8.15.pdf>

NOTE: If any of the above sounds confusing to you, that is totally understandable and nothing to worry about. A bit later we will tell you EXACTLY what you need to know and the steps to take.

Dealing with Creditors

The creditor or collection agency has a right to send you letters or call you once a day, but harassing you all hours of the night, calling you at your job, or threatening you with legal action, is illegal!

Collection agencies may not use abusive language or call family members or close friends, disclosing your debts to them, because it is against the law.

If any of your creditors are calling you and engaging in illegal tactics, you have the right to report them to your Attorney General, the BBB and

the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. In addition, you may be awarded damages, should you choose to file a small claims lawsuit against them.

Another thing that collection agencies cannot do is violate state licensing and/or bond requirements. Each state has different licensing requirements for collection agencies, attorneys, and debt buyers. It is not uncommon to find collection agencies violating a states consumer protection laws by attempting to collect on accounts without having the required license and/or bond in place.



Pre-Dispute - Bond/License Search & What To Do

One new tactic that has recently been adopted and proven to be extremely successful, is utilizing your states consumer protection laws regarding the requirement of having a license, bond, or both to be able to collect. Some states do not have any such requirements, but many do and therefore, this tactic can be used before sending one dispute letter.

You don't need to worry about reading any laws, we've provided a great website where you simply click on

your state and utilize the links provided to search the collection agencies that are reporting on your credit reports.

Whether you have only received collection notices in the mail or you have collection accounts on your credit report, it is highly advised that you know your States Licensing Requirements. **Please note: Not all states have requirements.**

If your state requires a license/bond/or both, and you find a collection agency that is deficient in this requirement, you can use that leverage against violating collectors!

First: Determine Your State's Licensing Laws

<https://cornerstonesupport.com/debt-collection-licensing-statutes/>

This site is extremely user-friendly. Click on your state and scroll down. A list will appear that will provide links that take you directly to your state's website to search the collection agency name to see if they meet the requirements to collect in your state. You will also see a detailed explanation of the "Possible Exemptions".



Gather Evidence

If you discover that the collection agency is violating your States Licensing Requirements, make sure you screenshot that evidence as you need proof that they are not in compliance.

File Complaints

3. File complaints with the CFPB, your State Attorney General, the collection agencies State Attorney General, and the BBB. You will need to write your own complaint stating the collection agency is violating State Licensing Requirements. Make sure you attach proof of any mailed communications, telephone calls, proof of non-compliance, etc.

Getting Inaccurate, Incomplete, Unfair, and Unverifiable Items Removed

We like to start with the FDCPA section 807(8) and FCRA section Section 623(a)(3). Remember, the FDCPA deals with collection agencies and the FCRA deals with banks/creditors.

The big key item to remember is that ANY TIME you contact any of these entities questioning a line item that they placed on your credit report, they are required to contact the credit bureaus on your behalf, and make sure they add a sentence to your credit report WITHIN 30 CALENDAR DAYS that says you have disputed the negative item in question. This is because, in general, most requirements in the FDCPA have a 30-day window for resolution.

The required sentence would appear on your credit report with something



like this: "Customer has disputed the validity of this item".

The thing is they almost never add the sentence. In our experience, over 90% of the time, they just don't do it.

If they do, it is usually not in time either. Sometimes they will do it within 60 days. Not Good Enough!

That's too bad for them because by law, they MUST add the dispute notice within 30 days.

What does that mean for you?

You will get a copy of your credit report on the day they signed for your letter, and you will get another copy of your credit report exactly 31 days later.

You will then have proof that they didn't follow the



Pro Tip: Keep the Oldest

If possible try to leave the oldest account open. The length of your credit history is a factor in your score. If you close that old account that you opened as a Freshman in college, that was not reporting derogatory, and only leave recent ones open, it will make it look as if you are much newer borrower.

law - that they didn't mark the item as disputed within 30 calendar days, and they may be liable to you for DAMAGES of up to \$1,000 per occurrence. Do you think they would rather pay you \$1,000 or remove the item?

This will give you massive leverage to get the items removed.

When you start the process, you will be asking the collection agencies some hard-hitting questions and requesting very specific information from them.

Information such as a copy of the original contract you physically signed, supposedly agreeing to their payment terms when you opened the account.

Many companies do not have these records readily available, and in fact many have no records at all.

If you're beginning to notice, we are forcing these companies to work harder than they normally do. They usually try to collect from uninformed people who they consider "easy money" or "low hanging fruit". So we are putting them on notice that we aren't just going to lay down for them. They actually have to do their job and follow the law. What a concept!

The letters we provide apply to the majority of situations. They begin with demands for validation - i.e. proof that you owe the amount stated. They escalate depending on the response or lack of response. You should edit the letter templates to relate to your own situation and how aggressive you want to be, and what your reasoning is:

- inaccurate
- incomplete
- unfair
- unverifiable
- not yours

The letter sending process is a 2 part process.

Part 1 is for dealing with the creditors and collection agencies directly.

Part 2 is for dealing with the credit bureaus.

For the best results, we do not recommend skipping ahead. The exception is "public records" (judgments, bankruptcies, liens) - for those you can skip directly



Part 1 Letters

to part 2, since you cannot dispute or challenge them directly with a collection agency, a creditor or a court.

Sample Letters Templates

IMPORTANT – For the absolute best results, we recommend sending any of the letters you use below via **CERTIFIED MAIL**, with a return receipt requested - you can also opt to save some money on postage by only requesting “electronic delivery confirmation” instead of getting the receipt mailed to you. Either option will not only ensure its delivery, but you will have a documented time of when it was received.

Please do **NOT** dispute negative accounts online or over the phone! When you dispute online/phone you waive the right to see the method of verification received by the bureaus from the creditor and since the dispute was online, the verification used was e-oscar. So there's **NO** paper trail for record-keeping. Section 611a(8) of the FCRA states that the agency may disregard other paragraphs if the information is deleted within three days of notice of a dispute.

The paragraphs to be disregarded include the following requirements:

- 1.) The credit reporting agency doesn't have to forward the dispute and other information to the creditor.
- 2.) The credit reporting agency doesn't have to provide you with written results from the investigation

of the dispute.

- 3.) The credit reporting agency doesn't have to show the method of verification.

Additionally, the type of deletion in this situation is known as a soft or temporary delete, which can then be reinstated when the creditor reports the next time. The consumer protection laws require Credit Bureaus to provide you a 5-day written notice prior to re-inserting deleted items however if you dispute online/phone, you lose this leverage as well. They are not required to provide the 5-day written notice and deleted items can be placed back on your credit report pretty much without notification.

Therefore, sending letters certified/return receipt is very important because you are going to need to prove that the credit bureaus, collection agencies & creditors failed to properly investigate and/or mark your account as disputed within the 30-day time-frame required by law. As soon as they sign for your letter, the clock starts ticking, and you will have a receipt of when they signed for it. Although some creditors or collection agencies may respond to your letters very quickly, you will **ALWAYS** wait 30 days. Even if your letter is requesting information from them within a shorter specified time frame, you always wait 30 days before you send your next letter.

On **DAY 31** (31 calendar days after they have signed for the letter) you

will print out a new copy of your credit reports, and they will be time & date stamped as well. This will provide you with proof of whether or not they marked the item “disputed” as required by the law. If they do it AFTER the 30 day mark, you now have leverage on them that they have violated the FCRA and FDCPA.

According to the law, the burden of proof is on the credit bureau and/or the furnisher of the information - NOT YOU. Meaning you are allowed to challenge any item that you believe is unverifiable or inaccurate.

However, if you DO know and concede that an item is 100% yours, there are many other ways to go after remove it - instead of claiming it doesn't belong to you, you can challenge it based on any of the following potential errors that you believe may be occurring:

- Incorrect balance
- Missing information
- Incorrect credit limit
- High balance is lower than owed balance
- “Status” or any other field blank
- “Status” incorrect
- Incorrect high balance
- Late pays after an account was

closed

- Account number inaccurate (may include X's or asterisks instead of full number - this is a BIG issue that we will talk about more later)
- Account type inaccurate
- Invalid furnisher (more on this later)



Pro Tip: Dispute Anything!

It is important to note that you are legally allowed to dispute anything on your credit report because the burden of proof is on them, not you. If you do not recall an item in any way, or believe the date is wrong, the amount is wrong, or ANYTHING at all is suspicious, requesting validation is generally good practice in order to get the best and most accurate results.

- Date of last activity incorrect (the 7-year clock starts on the last payment you made, and no one is allowed to “re-age” the item to start the clock over - even paying off a collection does not reset the last payment date)
- Date of last update incorrect
- Date reported inaccurate
- Collection account listed with a limit, but a collection cannot have a limit
- Charge off listed as “open” or collection

Part 1 Letters

While our sample letter templates below are for accounts that you claim are not yours, you should feel free to change them to the situation that applies to you, using one or more of the above issues.

Lastly, here are a few common replies you will get to the letters in Part 1 (to creditors and collection agencies):

Blah Blah Blah: The creditor or collection agency may reply with a letter saying a whole bunch of stuff you don't understand, and many times what they say isn't even legal or true (such as saying they don't need to give you proof of anything). We call these "stall tactics", and

typically continue with the next letter.

Verified: The creditor or collection agency may provide you with what they call "proof", such as an itemized printout of what they claim is your account or billing statement. The FTC has issued an opinion letter on this subject, and concludes that an itemized printout does not represent verification. Here is a link to the FTC opinion letter: <http://creditsecret.org/wollmanopinion.jpg> - When you send letter #2 you will have massive leverage.

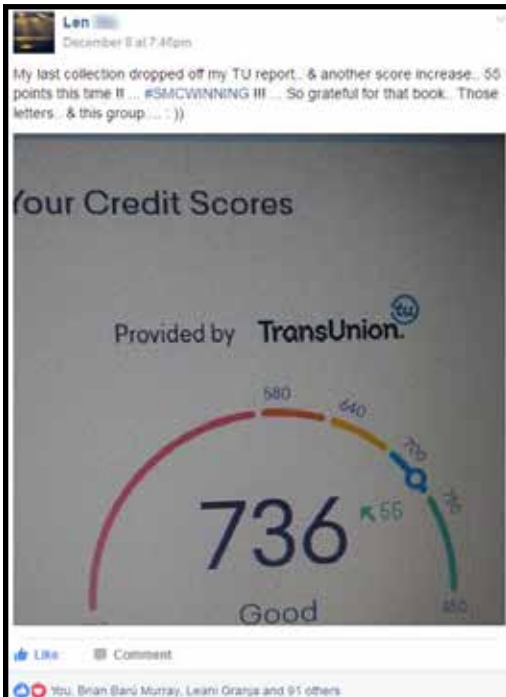
No reply: If they do not reply within 30 days of receiving your letter, they are in violation of the FDCPA and FCRA. You will now have massive leverage going into letter #2.

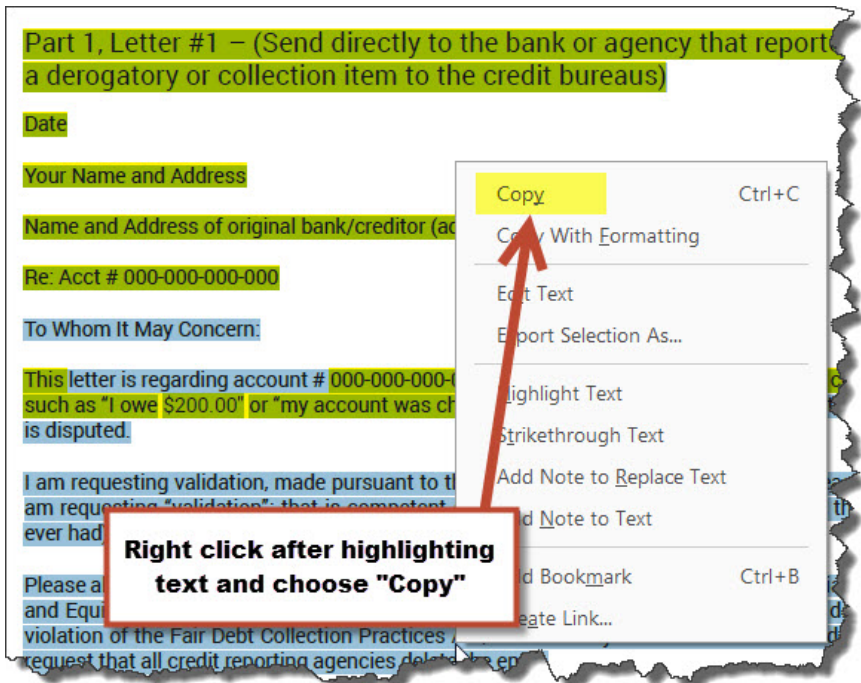
Mail returned undeliverable

If you mailed your letter to the address of the collector/creditor that is listed on your credit report and it comes back returned, that means they are reporting inaccurate data because they provided a false address to reach them on your credit report. You can then make a copy of the returned mail and send it to the credit bureaus as proof, and request removal.

Printing the Letters

If you are reading this book as a hardcopy, you can log in to your member's dashboard





at <http://www.creditsecret.org/login> and download the digital version. Once you have downloaded the PDF file, you can use Adobe Acrobat or Adobe Reader to open it. Then you can simply copy and paste each letter into a word processor like Microsoft Word, Google Docs or [OpenOffice.org](http://www.openoffice.org).

Highlight the entire letter with your mouse and then right-click and select “Copy”. Then open a new document in your editor of choice, right-click and select “paste”.

Then make the changes necessary to format & personalize it.

Lastly, DO NOT sign any letters you send. You do not want your signature being compared and used against you later if they do happen to find your original contract. A typed version of your name is enough to send the letters.

OK enough talk - Let's do this!

Part 1, Letter # 1

This is the letter that you send directly to the bank or agency that reported an inaccurate, unfair, or unverifiable derogatory or collection item to the credit bureaus.

Date

Your Name

Your Address

Name of creditor/collection agency

Address of creditor/collection agency (from your credit report)

Re: Acct # 000-000-000-000

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is regarding account #000-000-000-000, which you claim [insert a derogatory condition here, such as “I owe \$200.00” or “my account was charged off \$800”]. This is a formal notice that your claim is disputed.

I am requesting validation, made pursuant to the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act and the Fair Credit Reporting Act, along with the corresponding local state laws. Please note that I am requesting “validation”; that is competent evidence bearing my signature, showing that I have (or ever had) some contractual obligation to pay you.

Please also be aware that any negative mark found on my credit reports (including Experian, TransUnion and Equifax) from your company or any company that you represent, for a debt that I don’t owe, is a violation of the FCRA & FDCPA; therefore if you cannot validate the debt, you must request that all credit reporting agencies delete the entry.

Pending the outcome of my investigation of any evidence that you submit, you are instructed to take no action that could be detrimental to any of my credit reports.

Failure to respond within 30 days of receipt of this certified letter may result in small claims legal action against your company at my local venue. I would be seeking a minimum of \$1,000 in damages per violation for:

- Defamation
- Negligent Enablement of Identity Fraud
- Violation of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (including but not limited to Section 807-8)
- Violation of the Fair Credit Reporting Act (including but not limited to Section 623-b)

(Letter continued on next page)

(Part 1, Letter #1 continued)

Please Note: This notice is an attempt to correct your records, and any information received from you will be collected as evidence should any further action be necessary. This is a request for information only, and is not a statement, election, or waiver of status.

My contact information is as follows:

Your Name (printed not signed)

Your Address

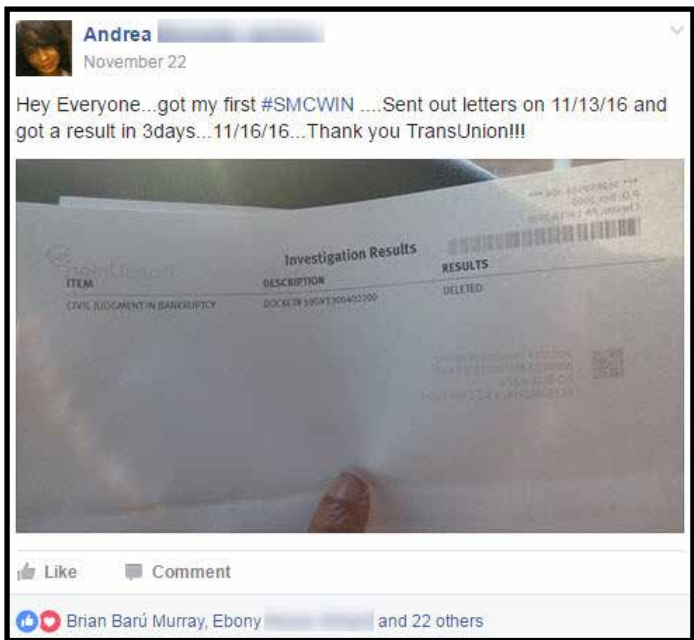
Last 4 of SSN

P.S. Please be aware that dependent upon your response, I may be detailing any potential issues with your company via an online public press release, including documentation of any potential small claims action. I am also including a copy of my complaint to the organizations below:

CC: Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

CC: Attorney General's Office

CC: Better Business Bureau



Part 1 Letter #2A

You will send this second letter only if you receive a letter back from a creditor/collection agency in reply to letter # 1, saying your account was verified as accurate.

Date

Your Name

Your Address

Name of creditor/collection agency

Address of creditor/collection agency (from your credit report)

Re: Acct # 000-000-000-000

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is in response to your recent claim regarding account #000-000-000-000, which you claim [insert a derogatory condition here, such as “I owe \$200.00” or “my account was charged off \$800”].

Yet again, you have failed to provide me with a copy of any viable evidence, bearing my signature, showing the account is being reported accurately.

Be advised that the description of the procedure used to determine the accuracy and completeness of the information is hereby requested.

Additionally, please provide the name, address, and telephone number of each person who personally verified this alleged account, so that I can inquire about how they “verified” without providing any proof, bearing my signature.

As per FTC opinion letter from Attorney John F. LeFevre, you should be aware that a printout of a bill or itemized document does not constitute verification.

I am again formally requesting a copy of any documents, bearing my signature, showing that I have a legally binding contractual obligation to pay you the alleged amount.

Be aware that I am making a final goodwill attempt to have you clear up this matter. The listed item is inaccurate and incomplete, and represents a very serious error in your reporting.

I am maintaining a careful record of my communications with you for the purpose of filing a complaint with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the Attorney General’s office, should you continue in your

(Letter continued on next page)

(Part 1, Letter #2A continued)

non-compliance of federal laws under the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, the Fair Credit Reporting Act, and the corresponding local state laws. I further remind you that you may be liable for your willful non-compliance.

Failure on your behalf to provide a copy of any alleged contract or other instrument bearing my signature may result in a small claims action against your company. I would be seeking a minimum of \$1,000 in damages per violation for:

- Defamation
- Negligent Enablement of Identity Fraud
- Violation of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (including but not limited to Section 807-8)
- Violation of the Fair Credit Reporting Act (including but not limited to Section 623-b)

You will be required to appear in a court venue local to me, in order to formally defend yourself. My contact information is as follows:

Your Name (printed not signed)

Your Address

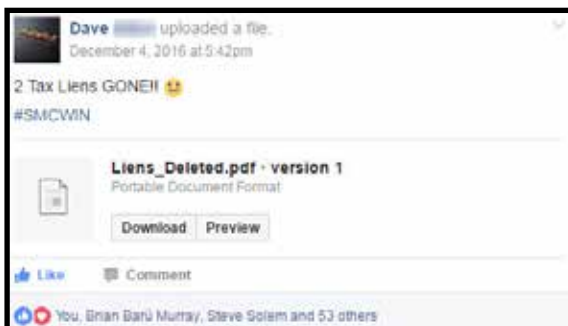
Last 4 of SSN

P.S. Please be aware that dependent upon your response, I may be detailing any potential issues with your company via an online public press release, including documentation of any potential small claims action.

CC: Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

CC: Attorney General's Office

CC: Better Business Bureau



Part 1, Letter #2B

You will send this second letter ONLY if you DO NOT hear back from the creditor/collection agency in reply to letter #1.

Date

Your Name

Your Address

Name of creditor/collection agency

Address of creditor/collection agency (from your credit report)

Re: Acct # 000-000-000-000

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is in response to your recent claim regarding account #000-000-000-000, which you claim [insert a derogatory condition here, such as “I owe \$200.00” or “my account was charged off \$800”].

By not replying in a timely manner to my initial letter on [insert date], you have not only violated federal and state laws, but you have also failed to provide me with a copy of any viable evidence, bearing my signature, showing the account is being reported accurately.

Be aware that I am making a final goodwill attempt to have you clear up this matter. The listed item is entirely inaccurate and incomplete, and represents a very serious error in your reporting.

I am maintaining a careful record of my communications with you for the purpose of filing a complaint with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the Attorney General’s office, should you continue in your non-compliance of federal laws under the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, the Fair Credit Reporting Act, and the corresponding local state laws. I further remind you that you may be liable for your willful non-compliance.

Failure on your behalf to provide a copy of any alleged contract or other instrument bearing my signature may result in a small claims action against your company.

I would be seeking a minimum of \$1,000 in damages per violation for:

- Defamation
- Negligent Enablement of Identity Fraud

(Letter continued on next page)

(Part 1, Letter #2B continued)

- Violation of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (including but not limited to Section 807-8)
- Violation of the Fair Credit Reporting Act (including but not limited to Section 623-b)

You would be required to appear in a court venue local to me, in order to formally defend yourself. My contact information is as follows:

Your Name (printed not signed)

Your Address

Last 4 of SSN

P.S. Please be aware that dependent upon your response, I may be detailing any potential issues with your company via an online public press release, including documentation of any potential small claims action.

CC: Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

CC: Attorney General's Office

CC: Better Business Bureau



Part 1, Letter #2C

Often times you will dispute the collection accounts on your credit report and the collection agency doesn't answer you but you receive a response from the original creditor. This is not acceptable. Send the following letter if you dispute a collection account but receive a response from the original creditor.

Date

Your Name

Your Address

Name of creditor/collection agency

Address of creditor/collection agency (from your credit report)

Re: Acct # 000-000-000-000

To Whom It May Concern:

On [insert date], I wrote to you requesting validation and an investigation into items that I believed were inaccurate. To date, I have not received any such validation. The only reply from you was a letter from [insert original creditor] dated [insert date]. In my previous request directly to you, I listed my reasons for disputing the information and requested validation.

Since this is my second request, I will also be sending a copy of this letter to the Federal Trade Commission notifying them that I have signed receipts for letters sent to you and you have not complied with my request. I regret that I am being forced to take such action.

Please note that on 3/20/2019 the CFPB released its Fair Debt Collection Practices Act Annual Report and it stated the following:

“The Bureau notes that one or more debt collectors continued collection activity despite not properly obtaining and mailing debt verification after a consumer exercised his or her 1692g rights. Specifically, the Bureau calls out the practice where “debt collectors forwarded consumer debt validation requests to the relevant clients, who mailed responses directly to the consumers.”

Section 809(b) of the FDCPA requires a debt collector, upon receipt of a written debt validation request from a consumer, to cease collection of the debt until IT (meaning the collection agency)

obtains verification of the debt and mails it to the consumer. Examinations found that one or more debt collectors routinely failed to mail debt verifications before engaging in further collections activities.

Instead, one or more debt collectors forwarded consumer debt validation requests to the relevant clients, who mailed responses directly to consumers and the debt collectors then continued collection activities on accounts in violation of section 809(b) of the FDCPA.”

Failure on your behalf to provide a copy of any alleged contract or other instrument bearing my signature may result in a small claims action against your company. Therefore, either provide the requested information or cease your collection efforts and reporting of this account on my credit reports immediately.

Sincerely,

Your Name (printed not signed)



Part 1, Letter #3

This letter only gets sent if your creditor/collection agency responds with what they consider “proof” of your original signature and obligation to pay. You must wait until the 31st day from when they received your first letter, then check your credit report to make sure they have not marked the item as “disputed”. If it is not marked as “disputed” in the comment section, we typically proceed ahead and send Part 1 Letter 3. If it IS marked as disputed, then you can proceed with Part 1 Letter 4 or Part 2 Letter 1 - it is your choice.

Date

Your Name

Your Address

Name of creditor/collection agency

Address of creditor/collection agency (from your credit report)

Re: Acct # 000-000-000-000

To Whom It May Concern:

Upon further investigation, I have retained new copies of my credit reports, and noticed that you did not furnish the credit bureaus with the required disclosure, within the period required by law. You are required by federal law to place a “notice of dispute” on my account within 30 days of my dispute, which you signed for on [insert date]. I have retained a copy of your signature and date of receipt, as well as a time-stamped copy of my credit reports, showing that you have violated the Fair Credit Reporting Act, Section 623(a)(3) and/or the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act Section 807(8) by not placing the disclosure within the required 30-day period.

Be aware that I am making a final goodwill attempt to have you clear up this matter. The listed item is entirely inaccurate and incomplete, and represents a very serious error in your reporting.

I am maintaining a careful record of my communications with you for the purpose of filing a complaint with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the Attorney General’s office, should you continue in your non-compliance of federal laws under the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

I further remind you that you may be liable for your willful non-compliance, as per FCRA 623(a)(3) - Responsibilities of furnishers of

(Letter continued on next page)

(Part 1, Letter #3 continued)

information to consumer reporting agencies [15 U.S.C. 1681s-2]

(3) Duty to provide notice of dispute. If the completeness or accuracy of any information furnished by any person to any consumer reporting agency is disputed to such person by a consumer, the person may not furnish the information to any consumer reporting agency without notice that such information is disputed by the consumer.

(B) Time of Notice (I) The notice required under subparagraph (A) shall be provided to the customer prior to, or no later than 30 days after, furnishing the negative information to a consumer reporting agency described in section 603(p).

As you have violated federal law, by not properly providing the credit bureaus with proper notice within the required timeframe, and I have evidence of such, via certified mail receipts, you must now remove the item. Any other action (or inaction) on your behalf may result in a small claims action against your company.

I would be seeking a minimum of \$1,000 in damages per violation for:

- Defamation
- Negligent Enablement of Identity Fraud
- Violation of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (including but not limited to Section 807-8)
- Violation of the Fair Credit Reporting Act (including but not limited to Section 623-a-3)

You will be required to appear in a court venue local to me, in order to formally defend yourself. My contact information is as follows:

Your Name (printed not signed)

Your Address

Last 4 of SSN

P.S. Please be aware that dependent upon your response, I may be detailing any potential issues with your company via an online public press release, including documentation of any potential small claims action.

CC: Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

CC: Attorney General's Office

CC: Better Business Bureau

Part 1, Letter # 4

You can send this letter if you have not heard back from the creditor, OR if they continue to “verify” the item without sufficient proof. This letter is for when you have taken legal action in small claims court. If you prefer not to go that route, it is completely up to you - you may want to skip ahead to Part 2, Letter 1 in lieu of filing a small claims lawsuit.

Date

Your Name

Your Address

Name of creditor/collection agency

Address of creditor/collection agency (from your credit report)

Re: Acct # 000-000-000-000

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is in response to your recent claim regarding account #000-000-000-000, which you claim [insert a derogatory condition here, such as “I owe \$200.00” or “my account was charged off \$800”].

Yet again, you have failed to: (choose which apply)

Provide me with a copy of any viable evidence bearing my signature.

Mark the item as disputed on my credit reports

Given that I believe you are acting in bad faith, and have not complied with the federal and state laws, I have filed a Small Claims lawsuit against you. (see attached lawsuit)

I have maintained careful records of your actions, and you are now required to appear at:

(insert courthouse and address) on (insert date).

I am seeking (insert dollar amount) in damages for: (choose which laws to include depending on whether or not they provided you with evidence or failed to mark as disputed)

- Violation of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (including but not limited to Section 807-8)
- Violation of the Fair Credit Reporting Act (including but not limited to

(Letter continued on next page)

(Part 1, Letter #4 continued)

Section 623-a-3)

· Violation of (insert corresponding state laws here if desired)

Prior to our court date on (insert date) if you should decide to correct your records and remove the negative and false item in question, please contact me at the address below, and I will subsequently withdraw the lawsuit.

My contact information is as follows:

Your Name (printed not signed)

Your Address

Last 4 of SSN

CC: Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

CC: Attorney General's Office

CC: Better Business Bureau





Pro Tip: The Automator

Are you in a hurry? Don't want to deal with copy and pasting and formatting letters in a word processor? Do you just want to click a few buttons and have your letters generated and sent through your computer via an online certified mail service?

Have no fear!

The Automator is here!

Available as an upgrade from your Credit Secrets Membership dashboard, The Automator is a PDF generator on steroids. You input a few simple items and it generates the letters for you. Once you are finished, it can even send the letters FOR YOU.

Our members that use the Automator say that it's a huge time saver especially if you have a lot of letters to send.

Letters Created by Automator:

PART 1: Letters Directly to Creditors and/or Collection Agencies

Part 1 – Letter 1 (Send directly to the bank or agency that reported a derogatory/erroneous or collection item to the credit bureaus)

Part 1 – Letter 2a (Send this letter only if you receive a letter back from a creditor in reply to letter # 1, saying your account was verified as "legitimate")

Part 1 – Letter 2b (Send this letter only if you do not hear back from the creditor in reply to letter #1)

Part 1 – Letter 3 (This letter is more aggressive. You can send this if you want to skip letters #2a or 2b and go hard on removal, or you can be nicer and wait to see what happens after sending letter #2a or 2b – it is

The screenshot displays the Credit Secrets membership dashboard. At the top, there's a blue header with the 'CREDIT SECRETS' logo and a five-star rating. Below this, a red arrow points to a 'Press Play' button next to a video player. To the right, a red box highlights the 'Access the Automator Here' link. Below the video, a red button says 'CLICK HERE TO GET YOUR UPDATED CREDIT REPORTS & SCORES FIRST'. To the right of this is a blue box titled 'How To Make Money Helping Others Fix Their Credit' with a 'BONUS TRAINING' section and a 'Click Here Now To Get Started >>' link. At the bottom, a green banner reads 'CREDIT SECRETS FAST-TRACK'. Below this are four blue buttons: 'The Automator Software', 'Home Buyer's Secret', 'Secret Money Method', and 'Bonuses'. A red arrow points from the 'Access the Automator Here' link to the 'The Automator Software' button.

When you upgrade to the Automator, you will be able to access it from within your membership dashboard.

up to you. **IMPORTANT:** At minimum you must wait until 31 days after letter #1 was delivered and signed for, and then you must verify that they have not marked the disputed item as “disputed” on your credit reports)

Part 1 – Letter 4 (Send this settlement letter if the creditor is not complying and you have filed a small claims lawsuit)

PART 2: Letters Directly to Credit Bureaus

Part 2 – Letter 1 (This is your original dispute with the credit bureaus directly – Send this if you have not had success with the letters in Part 1)

Part 2 – Letter 2a (Send this if you receive a letter back from the credit bureau, saying your account was verified as “legitimate”)

Part 2 – Letter 2b (Send this letter to the credit bureau if you do not get any response from letter #1)

Part 2 – Letter 3 (Send if you have not heard back from the credit bureau, or if they have continued to “verify” the item without proof)

PART 3: Additional Bonus Letters

Car Repo
Derogatory
Student Loan
Charge Off
Inquiry Removal
Goodwill
Returned Mail
5 Day Reinsertion
Alternative/Bizarre
HIPAA/Medical
Tax Liens
Public Records
Incomplete or Missing Info

After you choose “Automator” from the left hand side menu, if you have purchased the upgrade you will see the big green **ACTIVATED** status.

The screenshot shows a web interface for the 'Automator Wizard'. On the left is a sidebar menu with links: Dashboard, Automator, Automator Tutorial, Automator Usage, and FAQ. The main content area has a header 'Automator Wizard Status: **ACTIVATED**'. Below this is a message: 'Is this your first time using the Wizard? [Click here to watch the Tutorial!](#)'. A blue button labeled 'SKIP QUICK TIPS' is next to a note: 'Your personal license is limited to 30 uses per letter. If you need more, please contact support.' The 'Letter Wizard' section prompts the user to 'Please answer the following questions to create your letter'. It includes input fields for 'Date' (pre-filled with 09/19/2017), 'Full Legal Name', and 'Your Address'.

Pro Tip: The Automator

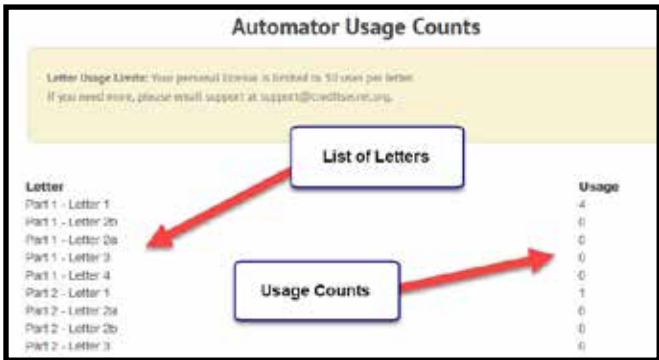
On the left hand menu and at the top of this screen, is a link to the Automator Tutorial.



If you have never used the Automator before, please watch the entire video.



You start with a credit of 30 uses per letter, and each user is entitled to one free reset. You can see how many of each letter you have used by clicking “Automator Usage” from the left hand menu. It will take you to a screen that looks like this:



To get started filing out a letter, click “automator” from the left hand menu. you will be taken to a form to fill out.

Answer all required questions.

Choose whether you are sending the letter to the Creditor or the Credit Bureau.

New questions will open up.

Date *

09/19/2017

Full Legal Name *

Jane Doe

Your Address *

123 Any Street

Address Line 2

Apt #2

City, State ZIP

Sometown, ST 12345

Are you sending this letter to the creditor/collection agency or credit bureau? *

Creditor/Collection Agency

Creditor / Collection Agency

What type of letter is this for? *

Select

Answer each one, until you get to the bottom of the form and press submit.

Car Repo

Derogatory

Student Loan

Charge Off

Inquiry Removal

Goodwill

Returned Mail

5 Day Reinsertion

Alternative/Bizarre (from the creditor)

HIPPA/Medical

Select

Select

What type of letter is this for? *

Derogatory

Part 1 Letters

Have you sent a letter to them regarding this matter? *

Select

YES

NO

Select

atan over

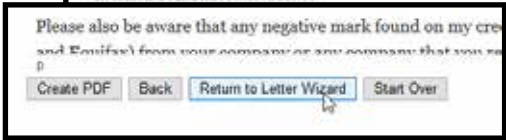
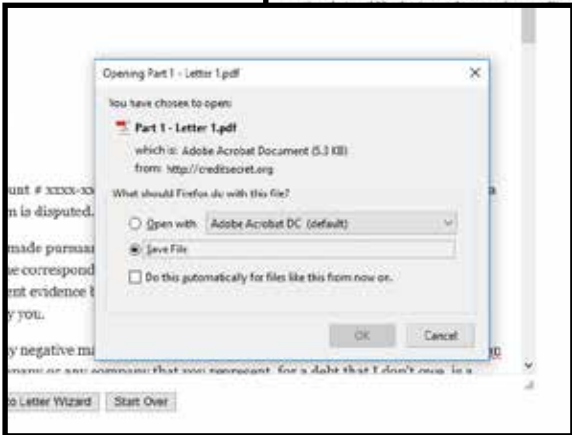
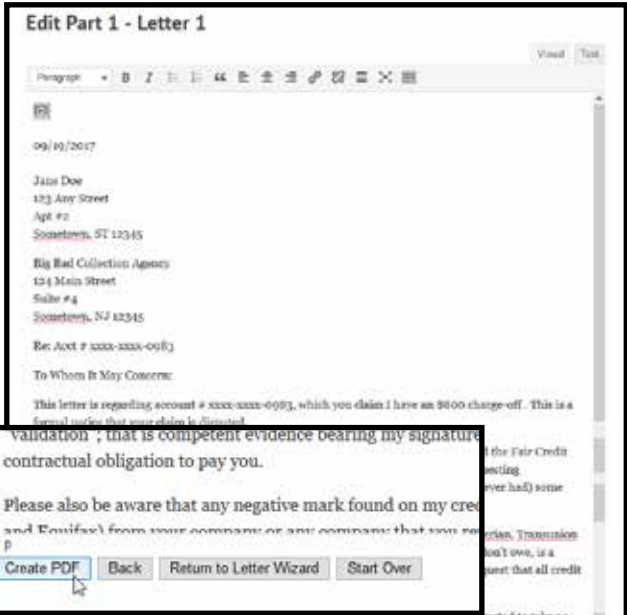
Pro Tip: The Automator

After you hot submit, a new screen will load with your letter in an editor, where you can fine tune it or add anything else you might need, such as more inquiries, or creditors, etc.

Once you are happy with your letter, click CREATE PDF.

A dialogue box will open and ask you to save the file. Some people will have their browsers setup to automatically save to their downloads folder.

Then you can click RETURN TO LETTER WIZARD and create another letter.



Skip the Trip to the Post Office

Send your letters via an automated Online Certified Mail solution and eliminate the hassle of going to the Post Office to send your certified letter. With OnlineCertifiedMail.com, you can send all your certified mail wherever you are. Just upload the PDF letters you create using the Automator, and away they go!

Click To Get Started After You Create Your PDFs

Get Started Now!

If you don't have time to go to the post office, then you can take advantage of Online Certified Mail by clicking the link in the left hand sidebar.

It will take you to a service provider that will handle the rest for you. Just fill out all your information, upload your documents, and away they go!

The screenshot shows the 'Send Certified Letter' page on the OnlineCertifiedMail By LetterStream website. The page has a blue header with the company logo and name. Below the header, the main content area is titled 'Send Certified Letter'. It contains several sections for user input:

- Document Upload:** Includes a text field for 'Name Your Letter:', a 'PDF Document(s)' section with a 'Select a PDF' dropdown, a 'Browse...' button, and a 'No file selected.' message. There are also checkboxes for 'Print on both sides?' (set to 'No (single)') and an 'Add Additional PDF' button.
- Return Address:** Includes fields for 'Senders Name 1:', 'Senders Name 2:', 'Address:', 'Suite/Apt #:', 'City:', 'State:' (a dropdown menu set to 'select state'), and 'Zip:'.
- Recipient Address:** Includes fields for 'Recipient Name 1:', 'Recipient Name 2:', 'Address:', 'Suite/Apt #:', 'City:', 'State:' (a dropdown menu set to 'select state'), and 'Zip:'.

At the bottom of the form, there is a disclaimer: 'Please make sure you are sending this mail documents to the correct address. Once your process you will not be able to cancel, delete or change your mailing. (Sorry, we can't...)' and a green 'CONTINUE' button.

Part 2 Letters

Part 2 deals with contacting the credit bureaus directly. This is not the letter you start with unless you're disputing a Public Record or Student Loans. Here the focus is on something called "method of verification".

First, you dispute the inaccurate, unverifiable or unfair item as per FCRA section 611(a)(1)(A).

If you get a response to your challenge/dispute from the credit reporting agency saying the disputed item was "verified" you have the right to request the "method of verification" under the FCRA, Section 611 (a) (6) and (7). The credit reporting agency must give you the method of



verification information within 15 days of your request.

This is something they typically cannot do, because they don't actually speak to anyone in order to get verification. Like we mentioned before, It is all automated through a computer, and computers

make errors. A third-party database was likely used to "verify" the disputed item automatically, which is insufficient. So we then request evidence such as the name, address and telephone number of anyone from the original creditor they contacted, and escalate from there.



Pro Tip: Send Evidence

If one bureau removes an item and the others don't, or if you send a letter that gets returned, you can send either of those to the credit bureaus as evidence that they need to remove the derogatory item in question.

Part 2, Letter # 1

This is your Original Dispute or Challenge with the Credit Bureaus directly. We only recommend sending these if you have not had any success with the letters in Part 1, or if you are disputing a public record.

Your Name

Your Address

Credit Bureau Name

Credit Bureau Address

Date

RE: Last 4 of SSN: 0000

To Whom It May Concern:

I have recently been informed that there is negative information reported by [insert name of collection agency, creditor or court] in the file you maintain under my Social Security number. Upon reviewing a copy of my credit report, I see an entry listing [insert a derogatory condition here, such as "I owe \$200.00" or "my account was charged off \$800"] in [month/year].

I challenge the accuracy, compliance and reportability of this listing.

Please validate this information with [name of creditor, collection agency, or court] and provide me with copies of any documentation associated with this account, bearing my signature. In the absence of any such documentation bearing my signature, I formally request that this information be immediately deleted from the credit file you maintain under my Social Security number.

Please note that you have 30 days to complete this investigation, as per the Fair Credit Reporting Act Section 611(a)(1)(A), and I am keeping careful record of your actions, including your Method of Verification. I do not consent to e-Oscar or any means of automated verification.

Failure to respond satisfactorily within 30 days of receipt of this certified letter may result in a small claims action against your company, seeking \$1,000 per violation for:

- 1.) Defamation
- 2.) Negligent Enablement of Identity Fraud
- 3.) Violations of the Fair Credit Reporting Act

(Letter continued on next page)

Chapter 2: Attack & Conquer

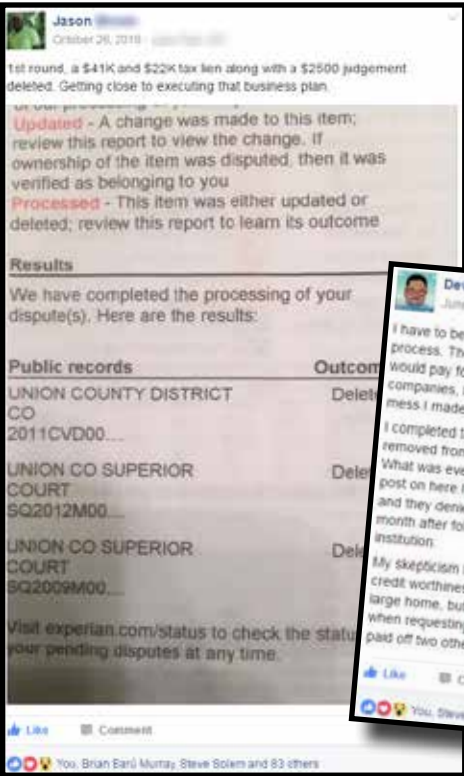
(Part 2, Letter #1 continued)

My contact information is as follows:

Your Name (printed or typed, not signed)
Address

P.S. Please be aware that dependent upon your response, I may be detailing any potential issues with your company via an online public press release, including documentation of any potential small claims action.

Cc: Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
Cc: Attorney General’s Office
Cc: Better Business Bureau



Part 2, Letter #2A

You can send this letter if you receive a letter back from the credit bureau, saying your account was “verified” as accurate.

Your Name

Your Address

Credit Bureau Name

Credit Bureau Address

Date

RE: Last 4 of SSN: 0000

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is in response to your recent claim that [insert name of creditor, collection agency, or court] has verified that the account they are reporting under my name is accurate.

Be advised that the description of the procedure used to determine the accuracy and completeness of the information is hereby requested, to be provided within fifteen (15) days of the completion of your re-investigation.

Additionally, please provide the name, address, and telephone number of each person contacted regarding this alleged account. I am formally requesting a copy of any documents provided bearing my signature, showing that I have a legally binding contractual obligation to pay them the exact amount claimed.

Any automated response or e-Oscar verification is unacceptable. I am requesting a reinvestigation AND your Method of Verification.

Be aware that I am making a final goodwill attempt to have you clear up this matter. The listed item is entirely inaccurate and incomplete, and represents a very serious error in your reporting.

I am maintaining a careful record of my communications with you for the purpose of filing a complaint with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the Attorney General's office, should you continue in your non-compliance. I further remind you that, as in *Wenger v. Trans Union Corp.*, No. 95-6445 (C.D.Cal. Nov. 14, 1995), you may be liable for your willful

(Letter continued on next page)

Chapter 2: Attack & Conquer

(Part 2, Letter #2A continued)

non-compliance.

Failure to respond satisfactorily within 30 days of receipt of this certified letter may result in a small claims action against your company, seeking \$1,000 per violation for:

- 1.) Defamation
- 2.) Negligent Enablement of Identity Fraud
- 3.) Violations of the Fair Credit Reporting Act

My contact information is as follows:

Your Name (printed or typed, not signed)

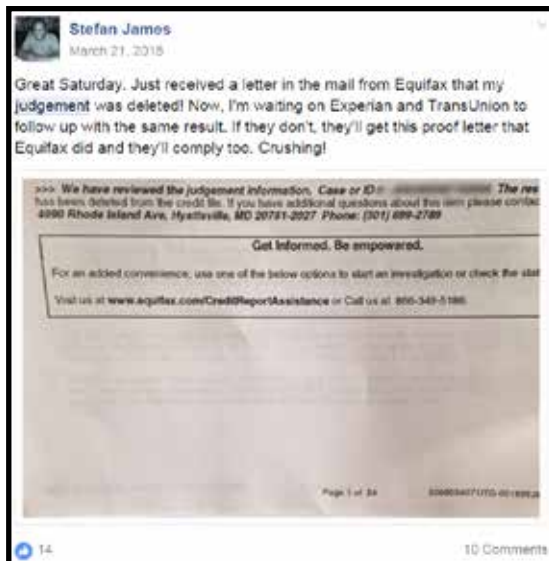
Address

P.S. Please be aware that dependent upon your response, I may be detailing any potential issues with your company via an online public press release, including documentation of any potential small claims action.

Cc: Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

Cc: Attorney General's Office

Cc: Better Business Bureau



Part 2, Letter #2B

You can send this letter to the credit bureau if you do not get any response from Letter #1

Your Name

Your Address

Credit Bureau Name

Credit Bureau Address

Date

RE: Last 4 of SSN: 0000

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is a follow up to my original letter dated [insert date of original letter] regarding an inaccuracy in your credit reporting, regarding the entry being reported under [insert name of creditor, collection agency, or court].

By not replying in a timely manner to my initial letter on you have not only violated federal law, but you have also failed to provide me with a copy of any viable evidence, bearing my signature, showing the account is being reported accurately.

Be aware that I am making a final goodwill attempt to have you clear up this matter. The listed item is entirely inaccurate and incomplete, and represents a very serious error in your reporting.

I am maintaining a careful record of my communications with you for the purpose of filing a complaint with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the Attorney General's office, should you continue in your non-compliance. I further remind you that, as in *Wenger v. Trans Union Corp.*, No. 95-6445 (C.D.Cal. Nov. 14, 1995), you may be liable for your willful non-compliance.

As you have now violated federal law, by not properly investigating within the required timeframe, and I have evidence of such, via certified mail receipts, you must now remove the item. Any other action (or inaction) on your behalf may result in a small claims action against your company.

I would be seeking \$1,000 per violation for:

- 1.) Defamation
- 2.) Negligent Enablement of Identity Fraud
- 3.) Violations of the Fair Credit Reporting Act

(Letter continued on next page)

Chapter 2: Attack & Conquer

(Part 2, Letter #2B continued)

My contact information is as follows:

Your Name (printed or typed, not signed)

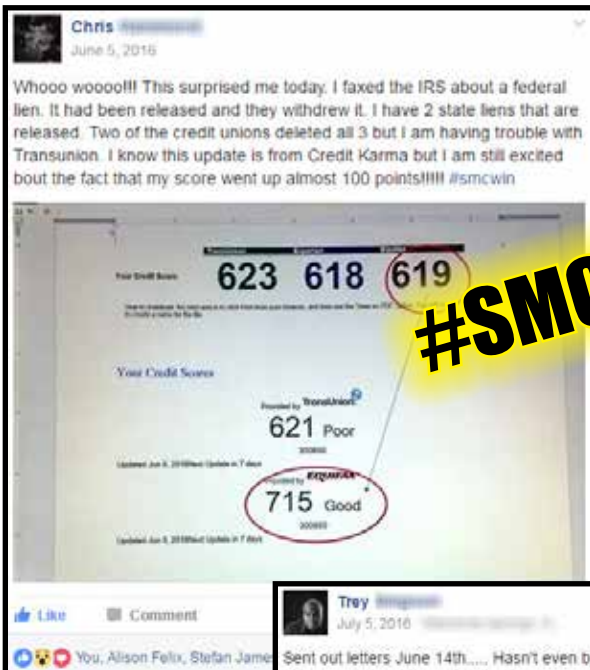
Address

P.S. Please be aware that dependent upon your response, I may be detailing any potential issues with your company via an online public press release, including documentation of any potential small claims action.

Cc: Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

Cc: Attorney General's Office

Cc: Better Business Bureau



Part 2, Letter #3

You can send if you have not heard back from the credit bureau, or if they have continued to “verify” the item without proof, and you are ready to take legal action. (or you could skip ahead to the “bizarre letter” or the “incomplete/missing info letter” in lieu of legal action)

Your Name

Your Address

Credit Bureau Name

Credit Bureau Address

Date

RE: Last 4 of SSN: 0000

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is my final communication in regarding the inaccurate entry being reported under [insert name of creditor, collection agency, or court].

I have repeatedly asked for evidence to support your reporting, but yet again, you have failed to provide me with a copy of any viable evidence submitted by [insert name of creditor, collection agency, or court] substantiating their claims. Furthermore, I have requested your method of verification, and you have not complied, which is an additional violation of the Fair Credit Reporting Act 611(a)(7).

Given that I believe you are acting in bad faith, and have not complied with the Fair Credit Reporting Act, I have filed a Small Claims lawsuit against you. (see attached lawsuit)

I have maintained careful records of your actions, and you are now required to appear at:

[insert courthouse and address] on [insert date].

I am seeking [insert dollar amount] in damages for:

- Violations of the Fair Credit Reporting Act - including but not limited to Section 611
- Violations of [insert any corresponding state laws if you desire]

Prior to our court date on [insert date] if you should decide to correct your records and remove the negative and false item in question, please contact me at the address below, and I will subsequently withdraw the lawsuit.

My contact information is as follows:

Your Name (printed or typed, not signed)

Address

Cc: Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

Cc: Attorney General's Office

Cc: Better Business Bureau

Public Records, Filing Complaints, and Additional Types of Letters

Public records are extremely damaging to your credit score. They consist mostly of tax liens, bankruptcies, judgments, and repossessions. Basically, anything where a court was involved.

Tax liens

The IRS defines a tax lien as “the government’s legal claim against your property when you neglect or fail to pay a tax debt.”

What does this mean to you? It means the government has the right to take your property away from you and either sell it or keep it to satisfy your unpaid taxes.

There are three major reasons why people get into tax trouble with the IRS and end up with a lien:

1. Employer failure to pay payroll taxes. Any time an employee gets a paycheck, the employer must withhold the employee’s income tax, the employee’s share of the social security, and Medicare obligation, and then send that money to the government. It’s actually very common for a business to fall behind on sending that in.
2. Failure to pay ordinary income taxes.
3. Failure to pay a tax due on a forgiven debt. This kind of tax debt can come as a huge surprise.

If you negotiate a settlement on debt (with a debt collector for example) and pay less than is due, the difference between what you actually owe and what you paid is counted as ordinary taxable income. Say you owe \$50,000 and your creditor agrees to accept \$30,000 as payment in full. In that case the IRS considers the forgiven portion (the \$20,000) to be taxable income. You’re going to get a bill for the income tax on this amount.

So if any of the situations apply to you, you’re going to receive a “Demand for Payment” and if you ignore it, it will allow the government to proceed to the next step in the collection process.

After you get the Demand for Payment, the government can then increase the pressure on you by filing a Notice of Federal Tax Lien (NFTL).

This formal legal document states the amount owed at the time the notice is filed, and it is usually filed in two places: (a) the registry of deeds in the county where you reside, and (b) the Secretary of State’s office in the capital city of the state where you live.

Apart from telling the whole world about your tax troubles (very unpleasant), the filing of an NFTL has other serious consequences.

- It encumbers (ties up) any real estate or personal property that you own.
- It freezes (locks down) any bank accounts you have. Once an

NFTL is filed in the county and state offices, your bank will soon know about it and your accounts can be frozen if you haven't agreed to a formal payment plan and kept it in good standing.

- It destroys your credit. If an NFTL is filed against you, it will soon find its way onto your credit report.

With a tax lien on your credit report, it is going to be extremely difficult to get any new lines of credit.

Tax liens can remain on your credit report for at least 7 years.

However, in April 2018, all tax liens were removed from credit reports by the main three credit reporting agencies. This change was due to the three nationwide credit reporting companies (Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion) entering into a settlement with over 30 state attorneys general called the National Consumer Assistance Plan (NCAP).

This was done to implement industry-wide policy changes to "make credit reports more accurate". The change was not meant to be permanent so it is possible for tax liens to start to appear on credit reports again at

some point in the future.

However, the requirements for them to report have changed. Moving forward, new and existing public record data will have to adhere to these two standards:

1. The minimum of consumer identifying information: name, address, social security number and/or date of birth.
2. The minimum frequency (every 90 days) of courthouse visits to obtain newly filed and updated public records.

However, if you still have a tax lien reporting, or one makes it way on to your credit reports, you can dispute it



Pro Tip: Good News!

On July 1, 2017, the three major credit agencies — Experian, Equifax and TransUnion — stated that they are removing all tax liens and civil judgments from credit reports if they do not match three of the four criteria required: of name, address, social security number, and birthdate.

"It's been good news for the consumer, clearly, because the credit score is used almost ubiquitously across the world of consumer finance, and lenders use it, insurance companies use it, credit carders use it," said John Ulzheimer, a credit consultant who has worked for Equifax and FICO, and resident CreditSecret.org specialist.

Ulzheimer warns the changes may not be permanent. "There is a possibility that if the credit reporting bureau is able to find the missing information, the negative information could reappear on consumer credit reports."

Public Records

for removal.

Form 12277 (<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f12277.pdf>) is how to formally ask the IRS for a withdrawal. Your request must be in writing and provide the names and addresses of the credit reporting agencies, financial institutions and/or creditors that you want to be notified.”

In layman’s terms, it means you can ask the IRS to notify the credit reporting agencies (Equifax, Experian and TransUnion) that the lien has been withdrawn.

Even if you haven’t paid the lien, a few years ago the IRS implemented something called the “Fresh Start” initiative, which is a series of procedures and policy changes directed toward taxpayers facing collections from the IRS. One of the changes includes a policy that allows certain taxpayers to request that their tax liens be withdrawn, even before the underlying tax debt has been paid.

You may qualify for this, but there is no guarantee. To qualify for this program after the lien is released, you must usually meet the following 2 criteria:

1. You have been in compliance with the law for the past 3 years when it comes to filing individual, business, and information returns
2. You are current on all estimated tax payments and federal tax deposits

To qualify for the program while the lien is *still* being paid, you must generally meet the following 6 criteria:

1. You qualify as a taxpayer.
2. You owe no more than \$25,000.
3. The Direct Debit Installment Agreement must be on track to pay off the entire amount within 60 months, or before the Collection Statute expires, whichever is earlier.
4. You are fully compliant with all other payment and filing requirements.
5. You have made at least 3 consecutive payments in the direct debit payment plan.
6. You have never defaulted on a Direct Debit Installment agreement.

If you meet either of these sets of criteria, you may be eligible to have the tax lien withdrawn from your credit report. If so, go on to the next steps.

1. After paying off your balance in full or being granted a waiver for your unpaid balance, you should receive IRS Form 668(Z), Release of Federal Tax Lien
2. Find your original IRS Form 668(Y), Notice of Federal Tax Lien
3. Fill out IRS Form 12277, Application for Withdrawal of Filed Form 668(Y)

4. Submit all 3 of the above documents to the IRS, along with an explanation of why you are requesting the lien to be withdrawn.
5. After some time for processing, you should receive IRS Form 10916(c), Withdrawal of Filed Notice of Federal Tax Lien.
6. You will use IRS Form 10916(c) and send it to the credit bureaus.

For State Taxes:

After paying your tax lien in full, you will need to contact your state tax office and request a form verifying the release of the lien. This process will differ by state. If you have an unpaid state tax lien, you can use the method below for removing it from your credit reports (although legally you will still owe the debt).

Judgments

A judgment is the final decision of a court regarding the rights and liabilities of the parties involved in the legal action that led to the judgment. Because judgments are an order of the court you cannot dispute them using the letters in the previous Chapters, but you can dispute the reporting of the judgment.

If you have a judgment against you there isn't much you can do but either satisfy it by making arrangements with the judgment holder for payments or try to have the judgment vacated. Judgments

that are not satisfied can be renewed every 10 years. Therefore, it may be in your best interest to work with the judgment holder to satisfy the judgment before they garnish your wages or place liens on your real property. Additionally, a satisfied judgment is much easier to get removed from your reports.

Foreclosures

Foreclosure happens when you default on your mortgage and your lender takes ownership of the home. As with the other previously mentioned public records, foreclosures are a legal process that ends the owner's right to the property. Usually the property is sold at an auction and the proceeds will go to the lender to reduce the mortgage debt.

There are several reasons why a foreclosure could be removed from your report:

- The foreclosure is over seven years old. Experian states a foreclosure can be removed after seven years from the original delinquency date.
- The lender is no longer in business.
- The servicer provided inaccurate information on the foreclosure.
- There was a voluntary dismissal.

The Loophole to Remove Bankruptcy, Tax Liens, Judgments, and Foreclosures (public records) From Your Credit Report

When a public record is filed against you, it is filed with a court. Whether or not you get it removed from your credit reports, that has no effect on having it removed from court records. So eventually, you should do your best to pay those and have them removed from court records. But in the short term, if you want a public record off of your credit report, here's what you could do...

When you look at your credit report, it shows who furnished the information. But if you look specifically at the public records section of your report, you will see that the bureaus claim the furnisher is the "recorder of deeds", "magistrate" or "municipal court". Sometimes it may just show the court address.

The problem is, none of that information is accurate. The recorder of deeds, the magistrate, or the court itself did not furnish any of this information to the credit bureaus.

Our members have obtained letters from courts over and over again, and they all confirm the same thing - that they do NOT furnish information to any third party, including the credit bureaus.

So why would the credit bureaus provide you with false information about who furnished the information?

We don't know the answer to that.

But what we do know is that the bureaus get public records information from companies (a.k.a. Data Miners) like "LexisNexis", or sometimes "PACER". These data miners are "for-profit" companies that are in the information-selling business. They regularly collect public records information into their database, and then they sell it to the main 3 credit bureaus.

We have no idea why the credit bureaus do not always list the data miner as their information provider. Whatever the reason, it is your loophole to getting public records removed, because it is a violation of the Fair Credit Reporting Act to report false information.

And claiming to get information from a court, when it is actually obtained from an unnamed 3rd party, could easily be considered "false information" on your credit report.

Furthermore, when you dispute a public record with the credit bureaus, they will sometimes go so far as to say they VERIFIED the information with the court! Again, this is completely false. They typically utilize an automated computerized system called e-Oscar (Online Solution for Complete and Accurate Reporting) that automatically checks with the data miner. The dispute is broken down into a 2 or 3 digit

Liens, Judgments

code and sent to the data miner for verification. (NOT to the court and NOT by a real live person)

First of all, it is sad and disgraceful that your heart felt letters, backed with proof, are reduced to a 2 digit code by a computer algorithm.

That is precisely why we provide you with letters that use words to get HUMAN attention, rather than automated, error-prone systems.

By now you should be starting to see why you have a real opportunity to get all of your public records removed. It is clear that the bureaus are providing false information on your report when they claim to get the information directly from the courts.

You can actually go down to your courthouse and get one of these letters for yourself. Or you can send them a letter, asking for an answer in return. In fact, we recommend it.

In order to create a paper trail, you will need to draft and send a letter to the clerk of the court where the

public record was filed. In the letter, request the procedure for verifying records with the credit reporting agencies. Enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope so that they can easily send you a reply.

Now you will have proof that the courts do not verify the information directly with the credit reporting agencies.

All of the above is plenty of ammunition to show the credit bureaus the error in reporting, and to get your public records removed.



Advanced Public Records Removal

Two additional tactics that we have found to be helpful is going a little further in getting more ammunition for public records removal. Many of our members have done the following:

The Security “Freeze” Trick

We previously spoke about how the credit bureaus actually obtain public records data from Data Miners, and not the public courts that they claim to. For example purposes, we will use LexisNexis, however, we list the other data miners you should also freeze later in this chapter.

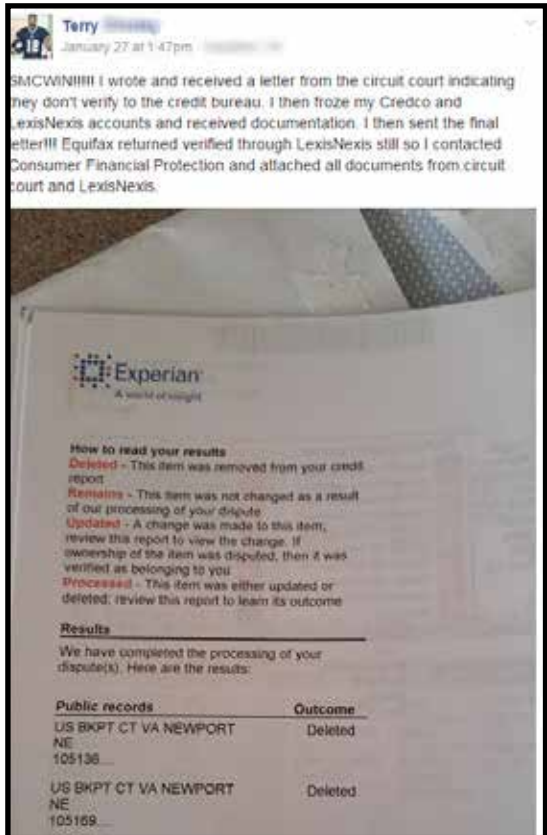
As of September 21, 2018, you can freeze and unfreeze your all your credit files for free. Because of this new federal law, you can request that a “security freeze” be placed on certain data that LexisNexis® Risk Solutions maintains about you, including some or all of the following: C.L.U.E. reports, Current Carrier reports, and Riskview reports. You may also subsequently release or lift a freeze at a later date. Placing a security freeze is as easy as making a phone call or visiting their website.

The general reason you

freeze is that the freeze keeps data miners from selling your report to others who claim that you applied for credit.

Furthermore, LexisNexis has an option to “opt-out/suppression” from letting anyone access additional data on your reports with them.

The reason why you suppress is that credit bureaus keep suppressed data behind the scenes to block a lender or collection agency from re-



reporting it. That's one reason why "suppressed" credit data is often referred to as "blocked."

However, in order to additionally "opt out" of other services they provide (where they sell your information) you will need to provide them with evidence that you've potentially been a victim of identity fraud.

Acceptable forms of proof are:

1. a police report
2. a copy of a letter from one of your creditors that identifies you as being a potential victim.

Remember when there was a huge data breach at Equifax in 2017? At that time millions of consumers learned about the breach, and Equifax stated that all affected customers were being provided with free credit monitoring for a year in order to prevent any fraud. This type of thing happens often when banks are hacked as well. But now it will be good news for you because it gives you what you need to opt-out of LexisNexis reporting altogether. If

you've ever received one of these notices you can provide that to LexisNexis in order to "opt-out".

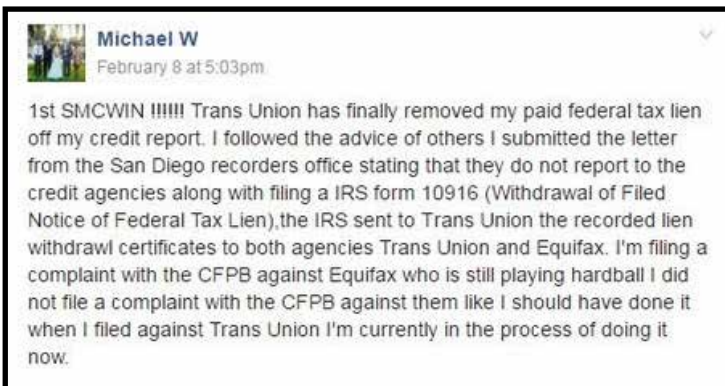
You may also want to "freeze & opt-out/suppress" several of the other popular information brokers/data miners below, all who may be selling information about you.

Make sure to include the following necessary information:

1. First and last name
2. Social security number
3. Date of birth
4. Primary phone number
5. Address including ZIP code

Two of the following forms of identification:

1. A copy of a state-issued driver's license or state identification card.
2. A copy of a "recent" cable, utility, or phone statement with an address matching the address provided in Step 1. "Recent" is defined as no more than 60 days old from the date of IDA, Inc's receipt of a written request.



3. A copy of a SSN card.
4. A copy of a birth certificate.
5. A copy of a U.S. passport (picture page only).
6. A copy of a voided consumer check with an address matching the address you provided in Step 1.
7. A copy of an Alien Registration Card.

Data Miner Contact Info for Freezing & Opt-Out/Suppression

LexisNexis – 888-497-0011

For more information on opting out, visit <http://www.lexisnexis.com/privacy/for-consumers/opt-out-of-lexisnexis.aspx>

CoreLogic Credco

(877) 532-8778

<https://credcofreeze.corelogic.com>

CoreLogic Credco, LLC
Consumer Relations Department
Security Freeze Request
P.O. Box 509124
San Diego, CA 92150

INNOVIS

(800) 540-2505

<https://www.innovis.com/personal/securityFreeze>

Innovis Consumer Assistance
PO Box 26
Pittsburgh, PA 15230-0026

SageStream

(888) 395-0277

<https://www.sagestreamllc.com/security-freeze>

SageStream, LLC Consumer Office
P. O. Box 503793
San Diego, CA 92150
FAX (858) 312-6275

ARS

(800) 392-8911

(no website)

5005 Rockside Road, Suite 600
Independence, OH 44131 or fax:
216-615-7642

For additional companies and data brokers you may want to freeze, visit <http://www.stopdatamining.me>

Data Miners

We've talked a lot about LexisNexis, and also mentioned the other data miners that you should freeze and suppress. These data miners are also governed by the FCRA and you can obtain reports from them because they sell your info to Equifax, Experian, and Transunion. Chances are, you will be amazed at how long they have been following you, and more importantly how much inaccurate information they have on you. So it is important to not only implement the "freeze/suppression" method mentioned earlier but to clean up these reports as well.

They are all responsible for adhering to the laws of the FCRA just like the main 3 credit bureaus. Don't let them try to fool you otherwise. In fact here is a link to a class-action settlement where LexisNexis allegedly attempted to skirt FCRA rules.

<https://topclassactions.com/lawsuit-settlements/lawsuit-news/40030-lexisnexis-pays-13-5m-fair-credit-reporting-class-action-settlement>

Obtain Your Data Miner Reports

LexisNexis

To get a copy of the information that LexisNexis has in your consumer file with them, you can either mail or email in your request.

First, you can download their form at:

<https://personalreports.lexisnexis.com>.

Mail your form and verification documents to:

LexisNexis

Consumer Center
Attn: Full File Disclosure
P.O. Box 105108
Atlanta, GA 30348-5108

Once they have received your completed File Disclosure Request Form and verification documents, it will take them approximately 15 days to process your request.

Disputing errors in your LexisNexis Report

Review your report for any derogatory information and use our template from Part 2, Letter 1 to dispute each item.

Send the letters to:

LexisNexis Consumer Center

P.O. Box 105108
Atlanta, GA, 30348

Upon receipt of your dispute, they have 30 days to conduct a reinvestigation of the information disputed and to record the current status of the information on your file or, in some instances, delete the information from your file.

Remember, they must adhere to the same rules as the other credit bureaus!

CoreLogic Credco

To obtain a copy of your CoreLogic Credco consumer file, you can call them at (877) 532-8778.

Or you can request a copy via mail sent to:

CoreLogic Credco, LLC
P.O. Box 509124
San Diego, CA 92150

Innovis

To obtain a copy of your Innvois consumer file, you can call them at 800-540-2505 or request it online here: <https://www.innovis.com/>

SageStream

To obtain a copy of your SageStream consumer file, you can call them at 888-395-0277.

Or you can request a copy via mail sent to:

SageStream, LLC Consumer Office,
P.O. Box 503793
San Diego, CA 92150

ARS

To obtain a copy of your SageStream consumer file, you can call them at (800) 392-8911.

Or you can request a copy via mail sent to:

5005 Rockside Road, Suite 600
Independence, OH 44131
or fax: 216-615-7642



Disputing errors in your errors in your Data Miner Reports Consumer File

Review your reports for any derogatory information and use our template from Part 2, Letter 1 to dispute each item.

Upon receipt of your dispute, the data miners have 30 days to conduct a reinvestigation of the information disputed and to record the current status of the information on your file or, in some instances, delete the information from your file.

Remember, they must adhere to the same rules as the other credit bureaus! This means you are watching for dispute comments on your data miner report AND you reports with the main 3 bureaus they are providing that information to as well. Most of the data miners fail to have the main 3 bureaus mark the item disputed!

In summary:

STEP 1) Obtain a letter from the court explaining that they do not provide information to the credit bureaus

STEP 2) Obtain a letter from data miners verifying your security freeze and opt-out/suppression.

STEP 3) Obtain your consumer file from the data miners so you can determine who is reporting the public record on their file for you.

STEP 4) Send Part 2 Letter # 1 to the data miners reporting the public record (bankruptcy, tax lien or judgment)

STEP 5) If any of the bureaus reply and say they “verified” it, you can then open up a dispute with the CFPB (Consumer Financial Protection Bureau) and give them all of your evidence, including the letter from the court, as well as evidence of your security freeze/opt-out.

After completing the above 4 steps you have a VERY good chance that the item(s) will be removed.



[illegible]

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB)

Launched in July 2011 as a supervisory and regulatory agency of the United States government, the CFPB is responsible for protecting the consumer in the financial sector. Technically, it protects every American and non-American using or relying on financial products and services. This is a good thing.

To many of us, the CFPB is still much of an unknown entity. Many questions still fly about as to what they do, where they derive their power, and who controls the watchmen. If we can draw precedence from history, the CFPB will, in the long run, be a best friend to the financial sector and a loyal friend to consumers alike. Hopefully, they will help us out with our credit reports along the way.

The empowerment of the CFPB marks the first time a federal regulatory agency has supervisory powers over credit bureaus. Interestingly, the bureau's hammer is not meant for just the big credit reporting agencies - Equifax, TransUnion, and Experian; the small ones are also subjected to their supervision. Around 30 companies, making up 94% of the industry are currently affected.

Everyone matters right now; both lesser known and influential. This is great news for us.

According to the CFPB website, "they are the government agencies charged with ensuring that banks, lenders and financial institutions treat consumers fairly." In its simplest form, the CFPB is empowered to make rules guiding how credit agencies operate. The Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) says that the credit reporting agencies are required to do a "reinvestigation" if the accuracy of credit report data is in dispute. But the Act did not spell out the modalities for the reinvestigation,

The image shows a screenshot of a letter from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) to a consumer. The letter is dated 10/17/14 and is addressed to a consumer with a case number 161019. The letter is from TransUnion and is titled "STATUS". The letter explains that the consumer's complaint about a disputed item in their credit report has been resolved. The item was a collection account from Portfolio Recovery #0856. The letter states that the item has been removed from the consumer's credit report and that the consumer's credit score has been updated. The letter also provides information about the CFPB's role in resolving disputes and provides a link to the CFPB website for more information.

cfpb Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

Case number: 161019

TransUnion

STATUS

Response disputed

TransUnion said:

Explanation of closure

We have reviewed your complaint along with the information you previously provided regarding this issue. On 10/17/14, Portfolio Recovery #0856 was notified of your dispute. In response to the investigation, the disputed information was verified or updated accordingly and the results were forwarded to you for review. In order to verify the accuracy and completeness of the items, we have contacted the source of the information and provided them with any additional relevant data as it relates to your complaint. As a result, Portfolio Recovery #0856 has been removed from your TransUnion credit report. Portfolio Recovery #0856 has been verified as accurately reporting per the data furnished. The Fair Credit Reporting Act allows adverse credit history, such as collections and profits and loss write-offs accounts, to be reported for seven years from the date of delinquency. Therefore due to FCRA guidelines, Portfolio Recovery #0856 will remain on your file until 8/20/21. We store information in our records as it is supplied to us by creditors. When information is disputed, we are required to investigate and report the current status of the information. We do not provide dispute verification responses received from creditors. If you need to obtain documentation or written verification concerning your accounts, then please contact your creditors directly. In order to protect your privacy, we have forwarded a copy of your credit report as well as the full results of our reinvestigation, via email. If you have any further questions, please call us at 1-800-916-8800, Monday-Friday, 9:00 AM - 11:00 PM ET. Please visit <http://transunion.com/consumersite> for frequently asked questions about your credit report.

Relief

We received your complaint about the items in your credit report, and apologize for any difficulty you may have experienced. The Portfolio Recovery #0856 account identified in your complaint has been deleted.

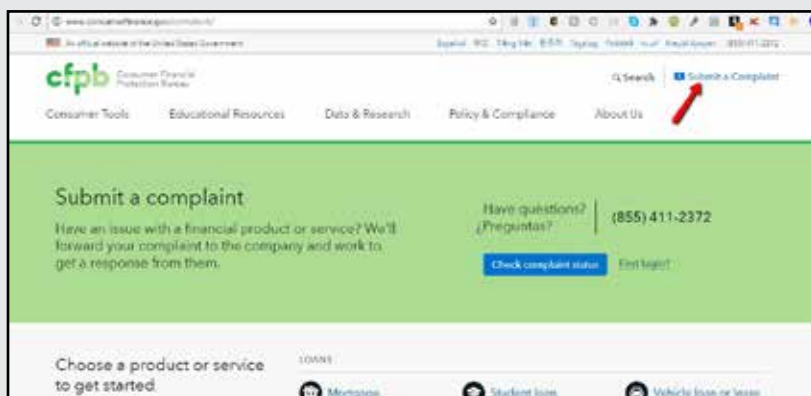
Response

We received your complaint about the items in your credit report, and apologize for any difficulty you may have experienced. We are currently investigating the disputed information and will contact the source(s) to advise them of your dispute. They will verify the accuracy of the item(s) and return TransUnion of their results. We will follow up with you within sixty (60) days from the date you submitted your request.

Filing a Complaint with the CFPB

If you have sent out the sequence of letters as outlined in this book, and had a few accounts that seem to be “stubborn” to remove, and you are reluctant to file a small claims suit, there is another option that many of our members are finding success with. A CFPB complaint only takes a few minutes to submit, and many members have seen accounts removed in two weeks or less.

Once you go to their website: <http://www.consumerfinance.gov/complaint> you can look through other consumer's complaints to get ideas of verbiage to use for your own complaint.



which is where the CFPB will come in.

Since the CFPB launched, consumers have benefited in numerous ways:

The CFPB successfully went after Discover, American Express, and Capital One, recovering around \$400 million dollars for consumers. They also made the credit card companies pay fines and agree to stop offering add-on services to customers.

The CFPB ordered TransUnion and Equifax to pay over \$23 million in fines and restitution for deceiving consumers about the usefulness of credit scores.

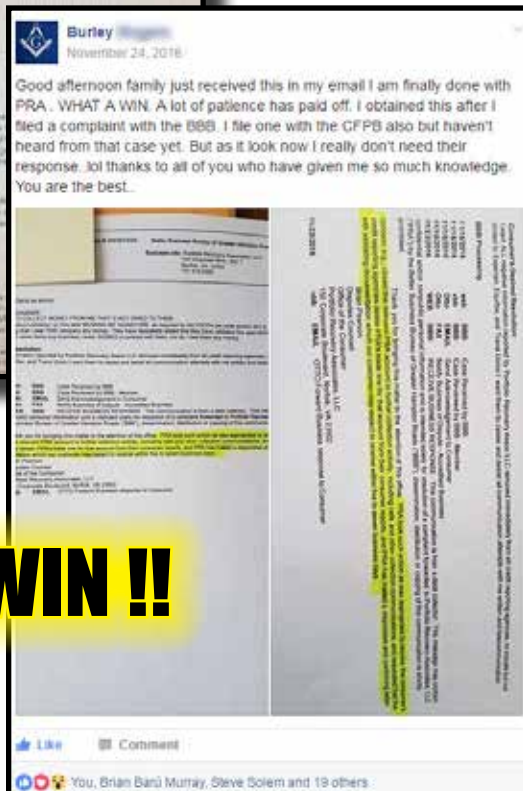
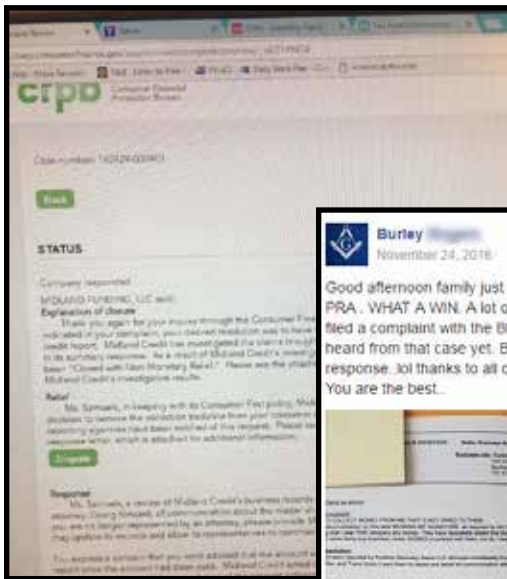
The CFPB went after Encore Capital Group (aka Midland Funding) and Portfolio Recovery Associates for alleged violations of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act and received a \$79 million dollar settlement.

State Attorney General Complaints

Another option, for some rare cases, is to file a complaint with your State's Attorney General. The state attorney general in each of the 50 U.S. states and territories is the chief legal advisor to the state government and the state's chief law enforcement officer.

Before you begin, you should understand that not every complaint received by the Attorney General's office is going to have action taken on it. Your complaint can be used for the basis of an investigation or legal action against the company you are complaining about.

You can find out who your State Attorney General is, and how to contact them at: <http://www.naag.org/naag/attorneys-general/whos-my-ag.php>



#SMCWIN !!

The Better Business Bureau

If you get stuck dealing with a creditor, and you aren't ready to take them to small claims court yet, some members have had success reporting the companies to the BBB.

What is the BBB?

The Better Business Bureau (BBB) is a group of private BBB organizations that promote a fair marketplace for both businesses and consumers. The organization gathers information regarding reliability, fraud, and ethical business practices and informs the public of scams and other business-related issues.

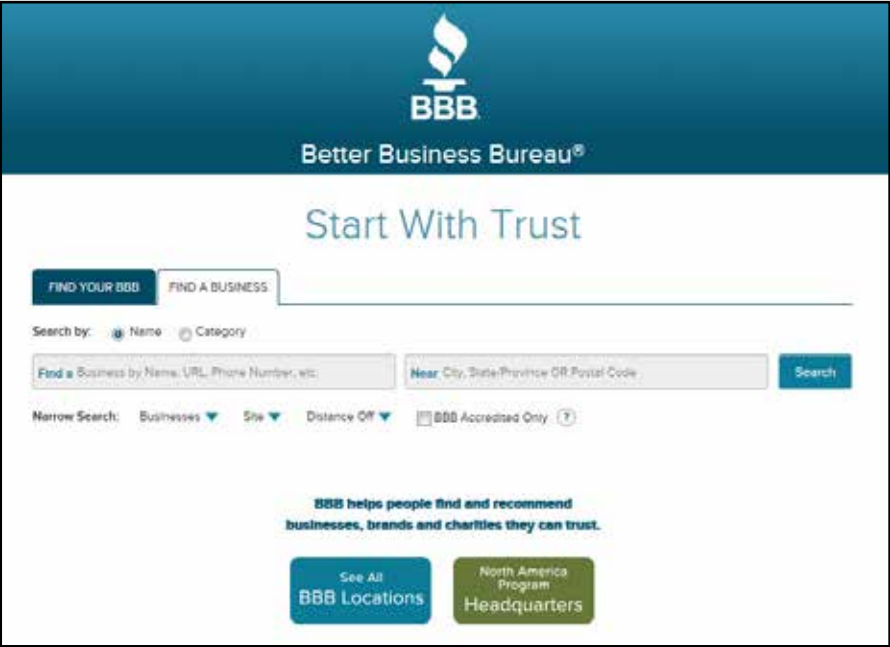
Whether or not the creditor/collector you are dealing with is accredited with the BBB, you can still file a complaint with your local BBB.

Complaint Facts

The general turn around time for the BBB to close a complaint, is about 30 days, although it can be less. If a company chooses to not respond to the complaint, it will be reflected in their BBB Business Review and impact their BBB rating.

Keep in mind, the BBB has no legal power to force anyone to comply with its complaint resolution process. The only reason a company responds to a Better Business Bureau is to maintain a good reliability report.

Once the BBB reviews the complaint, and deems it within their guidelines, they will forward it to the creditor/collector within one to five business days. The creditor will have a set



amount of time to respond. The BBB will notify you of the response and you'll have another 10 days to make a rebuttal, or the case will then be closed.

How to File a Complaint

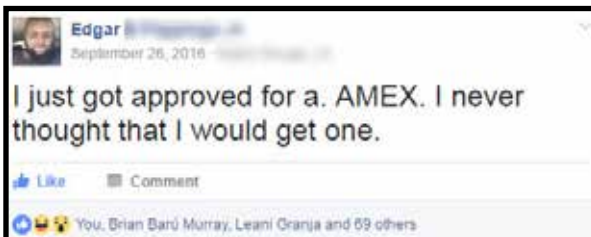
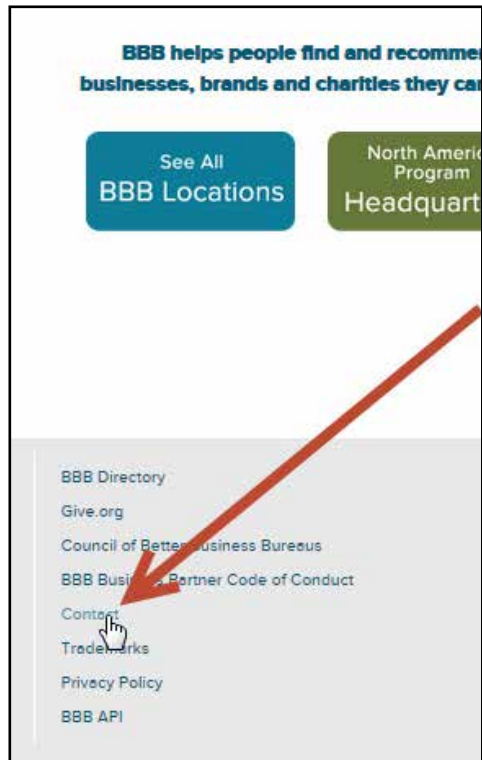
You can file a complaint over the phone or in writing, but the recommended way is to use the online complaint system.

Gather up all your supporting documentation, including the letters you've sent and any responses from the creditor.

Document what the issue is, in writing, outlining how you've tried to remedy the situation.

Be sure to clearly spell out the resolution you want. For example: "RESOLUTION HERE"

Once you have all of that ready to go, you can file your complaint by visiting www.bbb.org. From that home page, select "Contact" at the bottom of the screen.



The Better Business Bureau

On the new screen, select the link to “I want to file a complaint.”

The screenshot shows the BBB website with various links and information. A red arrow points to the link "I want to file a complaint" under the "Consumers" section. The link is highlighted in yellow.

Managing Credit Made Simpler
Recommended by Capital One
Guides for Consumers and Small Businesses

Budgeting Tips for Debt-Free Living
Recommended by clearpoint

Need Direct Selling Advice or Guidance?
DSOF
Direct Selling Education Foundation
LEARN MORE

Council of Better Business Bureaus
3033 Wilson Blvd, Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22201

National Advertising Programs
112 Madison Avenue
3rd Floor
New York, NY 10016

- NAD
- CARU
- ERSP
- NARB

Need help? Please look over our list below for help with common questions:

Consumers:

- I want to research a business: Please use our search feature to find reviews on businesses throughout the US and Canada.
- I want to file a complaint: Please use our online complaint form.
- I want to report a suspicious email, phone call, website or business practice: Alert BBB to the

Small Alert: Quite phoning can help businesses
Shopping Via App
Out for Fares
Shopping Via App
Out for Fares
Don't let phoning so apps ruin your the Website Referral
Fools Site Owner

VIEW MORE +

BBB Warning
Enjoy Polemon
Caution
Possible Canada Strike
BBB Issues Warning
JustFly.com
It's Valentine's Day
New Boo a Con A
Remember Steam

VIEW MORE +

Join Our EMAIL

The screenshot shows the BBB Online Complaint System page. A red arrow points to the "Start your complaint" button. The button is highlighted in yellow.

Better Business Bureau® Start With Trust® | Online Complaint System

BBB.org Contact Us

What complaints do we handle?

Disputes that relate to marketplace issues experienced with the services or products a business provides. BBB reserves the right to reject complaints that use abusive or foul language.

We do not handle:

- › Employee/employer disputes;
- › Discrimination claims;
- › Matters that are/have been litigated/arbitrated;
- › Complaints against individuals not engaged in business;
- › Issues challenging the validity of local, state, or federal law;
- › Complaints against government agencies, including the postal service;
- › Matters not related to marketplace issues.

How do we handle your complaint?

Everything you submit will be forwarded to the business within two business days. The business will be asked to respond within 14 days, and if a response is not received, a second request will be made. You will be notified of the business's response when we receive it (or notified that we received no response). Complaints are usually closed within 30 business days.

¿Estas buscando presentar una queja ante un negocio que se encuentra en México? Si es así haga clic aquí.

Start your complaint

The first screen of the complaint form asks you to verify the nature of your complaint.

You will need to select the following option:

Business product or service

Answer the military service question and choose Next.

The screenshot shows the 'Step 1: Nature of Complaint' screen of the Better Business Bureau's Online Complaint System. The header includes the BBB logo and the text 'Better Business Bureau® Start With Trust | Online Complaint System'. Below the header is a progress bar with six steps: Step 1: Nature of Complaint (active), Step 2: Find Business, Step 3: Your Information, Step 4: Your Complaint, Step 5: Additional Details, and Step 6: Review & Submit. The main content area is titled 'Verify the nature of your complaint'. It contains two sections: 'Is the business in the United States or Canada?' with radio buttons for 'Yes' (selected) and 'No'; and 'Your complaint involves a:' with radio buttons for 'vehicle', 'cell phone or wireless carrier', 'business's product or service (other than a vehicle or cell phone)' (selected), 'business's advertising', 'business's privacy policy or practices', and 'charity'. Below these is a question: 'Are you an active duty service member, a civilian employee of the Department of Defense, a military dependent or retired from active duty?' with radio buttons for 'Yes' and 'No'. A 'Next >' button is at the bottom left. A 'HELP' box on the right states: 'Answering the questions on this page will help us make sure your complaint is processed promptly.'

Now you have to search for the company to make the complaint about. For this example we used Portfolio Recovery Collection Agency.

The online complaint form has a search feature that lets you search for the company by using its full name or part of the name. You can also search by location, using the name of the city, state or zip code.

The screenshot shows the 'Step 2: Find Business' screen of the Better Business Bureau's Online Complaint System. The header is the same as the previous screen. The progress bar shows Step 2: Find Business as the active step. The main content area is titled 'Find Business'. It contains a search bar with the text 'Search For:' followed by a text input field containing 'Business Name, URL, Phone, Email'. To the right of this is another text input field labeled 'In:' followed by 'City, State or Postal Code'. A green 'Search >' button is to the right of the second input field. Below the search bar is a paragraph: 'Use the search bar above to find the business you'd like to file a complaint against. You can search using a Business's Name, Phone Number, Website URL or an Email address. Some businesses have more than one physical location. A business with multiple locations will be marked as such and when you select it from the list of businesses, you'll be prompted to choose a specific location.' A red arrow points to the 'Search For:' text. A 'HELP' box on the right states: 'You may search using business name, a phone number, website URL or email address.'

The Better Business Bureau

You are required to identify the specific location for the business. If you cannot provide this information, you will have to find it or you will not be able to proceed with the online complaint form.

The screenshot shows the BBB Online Complaint System interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Start With Trust | Online Complaint System' and 'BBB.org Contact Us'. Below this is a progress bar with six steps: Step 1: Nature of Complaint (checked), Step 2: Find Business, Step 3: Your Information, Step 4: Your Complaint, Step 5: Additional Details, and Step 6: Review & Submit. A search bar contains 'portfolio recovery' and a 'Search' button. The search results are displayed in a table with columns: Business Name / Address, Type of Business, and Select Business. The results list three businesses: Portfolio Recovery Associates, LLC; United Skye Portfolio Recovery; and Global Portfolio Recovery. A red arrow points to the 'Select' button for Portfolio Recovery Associates, LLC. To the right of the table is a 'HELP' section with instructions on how to search and select a business.

Business Name / Address	Type of Business	Select Business
Portfolio Recovery Associates, LLC Headquarters Review View BBB Review	Collection Agencies	Select
United Skye Portfolio Recovery 2840 Delaware Avenue (Suite #204) Buffalo, NY 14217 View BBB Review	Collection Agencies	Select
Global Portfolio Recovery Review for Multiple Locations	Collection Agencies	Select

Then choose: Start Your Complaint.

The screenshot shows the BBB Online Complaint System interface at the 'Select Business Location' step. The progress bar indicates Step 2: Find Business is active. A search bar contains 'portfolio recovery'. The search results are displayed in a table with columns: Business Name / Address, Address, and Select Business. The results list three businesses: Portfolio Recovery Associates, LLC; United Skye Portfolio Recovery; and Global Portfolio Recovery. A red arrow points to the 'Select' button for Portfolio Recovery Associates, LLC. To the right of the table is a 'HELP' section with instructions on how to search and select a business. Below the table, there is a 'Total Result: 3' and a 'Can't find the right location?' section with a link to 'Enter business information'.

Business Name / Address	Address	Select Business
Portfolio Recovery Associates, LLC Headquarters Review View BBB Review	120 Corporate Blvd., Ste. 1 Norfolk, VA 23502	Select
United Skye Portfolio Recovery 2840 Delaware Avenue (Suite #204) Buffalo, NY 14217 View BBB Review	P.O. Box 12914 Norfolk, VA 23541	Select
Global Portfolio Recovery Review for Multiple Locations View BBB Review	140 Corporate Boulevard Norfolk, VA 23502	Select

After you identify business and its location, you may be redirected to another screen. Your complaint will then be handled by the local or regional branch of the BBB where the business is located. You will need to proceed by answering the questions that are presented.

A screenshot of a web browser showing a "Notice" dialog box from the BBB of Greater Hampton Roads. The dialog box contains the following text:

Notice

You are now leaving www.bbb.org to complete your complaint with BBB of Greater Hampton Roads online complaint system. The local BBB which will handle your complaint has its own privacy policy. Please refer to it if you have any question about how your personal information will be used and stored. By clicking "continue" below, you acknowledge that the BBB is a U.S. organization, and you consent to the handling of your complaint and the processing of your personal data within the United States.

Their contact information is:

BBB of Greater Hampton Roads
586 Virginian Drive
Norfolk, VA 23505
(757) 531-1300
bbb@hamptonroadsbbb.org

At the bottom of the dialog box are two buttons: "Continue" (with a right arrow) and "Cancel".

You will be asked a few questions about your complaint, and receive some terms and conditions before you can move on. Answer and press Submit.

A screenshot of the "Online Complaint Form" for Portfolio Recovery Associates, LLC. The form is titled "Step 1: Verify the nature of your Complaint." and contains the following text:

By submitting your complaint to BBB you authorize:

- BBB to share your complaint with the business(es) involved
- Business(es) involved to share non-public information about you with BBB.
- BBB to share information provided by you and the business(es) involved with other BBBs and with third parties such as regulatory agencies and law enforcement authorities.

The text of your complaint will be publicly posted on the BBB website (BBB reserves the right to not post in accordance with BBB policy). Please do not include any personally identifiable information in describing the nature of your complaint. By submitting your complaint, you are representing that it is a truthful account of your experience with the business. BBB may edit your complaint to protect privacy rights and to remove inappropriate language.

Does your complaint concern employment practices?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Does your complaint allege discrimination?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Does your complaint allege civil rights violations?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Has this complaint case ever been involved in litigation?
☐ Yes ☐ No

At the bottom of the form are two buttons: "Back" and "Submit".

The Better Business Bureau

Now you have to complete the next section of the online complaint form by providing your name, address, telephone number, and other contact information. If you leave any of the required information blank, you will not be allowed to proceed with filing your complaint.

GOVERNORS • EMPLOY • BUSINESS LOAN • NEWS & EVENTS • BBB SCORE TRACKER



Start With Trust®

Southeastern Virginia & Northeastern North Carolina

Name

Category

Search by Business Name, URL, Phone, Email

Enter a valid location

Filter: Businesses

Source: Site

Distance: 125

BBB Accredited Only

Clear Location

?

OCT TO KNOW US • GET INVOLVED • GET CONSUMER HELP • PROGRAMS & SERVICES • FOR BUSINESSES

Online Complaint Form

Portfolio Recovery Associates, LLC

Step 2: Tell us about yourself

Please complete the personal information form. All fields shown in **red** are required. Anonymous complaints will not be processed. When you are finished click **Next**.

Complaint type

☒ Consumer to Business

☐ Business to Business

First Name/Prefix

Your First Name

Your Last Name

☒ Email

☐ Fax

☐ Mail

Please indicate your preference for correspondence regarding this complaint:

Enter your address. Enter only a valid address that the post office can deliver to.

Street Address1

Street Address2

Postal Code

City

State/Prov

No State/Prov Selected

Day Time Phone#

Evening Phone#

Cell Phone#

Fax#

Email Address (eg. name@domain.com)

Confirm Email Address

If you do not have an email address, you will need to file your complaint in writing with the local BBB where the business is located. Email correspondence will be sent by a domain called bbb-email.org. Please add that domain to your white list so that this correspondence does not get blocked by email spam filters.

There are groups of consumers that are sometimes targeted specifically. To help us identify scams that target specific groups, please answer the following questions.

Are you an active duty service member, a civilian employee of the Department of Defense, a military dependent or retired from active duty?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Are you a senior citizen?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Back

Next

Using a BBB and need help to make it easier to provide? Send us feedback on how we need to in order to proceed.

BBB Privacy Policy

Selected Language



BBB Directors

BBB.org

Locals of Better Business Bureau

Contact

BBB Business Practices

Chile

Terms of Use

Responsible

Privacy Policy

Right to Withdraw

Web Site



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Page 96

Step 3 of the process will ask you to confirm the location of the business you are filing the complaint about.

Step 3 : Select a location

Please indicate which of the company's locations below is involved with your complaint:

- ☒ ---No Address Attached---
- ☐ 120 Corporate Blvd., Ste. 1, Norfolk, VA
- ☐ 140 Corporate Boulevard, Norfolk, VA
- ☐ P O Box 12914, Norfolk, VA

Items in RED are required in order to proceed

[BBB Privacy Policy](#)

In Step 4, you will choose the category your complaint falls under. For this example we chose "Billing or Collection Issues".

Online Complaint Form
Portfolio Recovery Associates, LLC

Step 4 : Categorize your complaint

Does it involve health issue? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Select the general category from the list below that best fits your complaint:

Billing or Collection Issues

Advertising Issues

Billing or Collection Issues

Contract Issues

Customer Service Issues

Delivery Issues

Guarantee or Warranty Issues

Product Issues

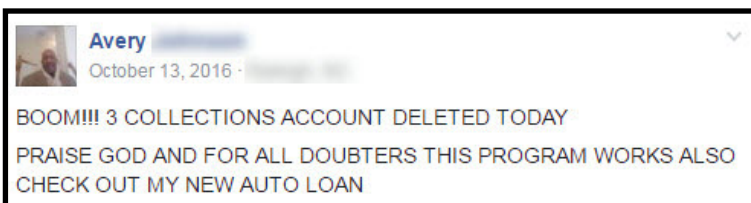
Refund or Exchange Issues

Repair Issues

Sales Practice Issues

Service Issues

--- Please select from the list ---



The next section of the online complaint form provides you with a blank text areas to explain your complaint. You may write as much as necessary (up to the form limits posted) to explain your complaint. When completing this section of the online complaint form, remember that the text of your complaint will be posted on BBB websites. Therefore, you should not include any personally identifying information in the text that you write. Do not include names, telephone numbers or account numbers.

[Microcontrol](#)
[Services](#)
[Business Loans](#)
[News & Events](#)
[BBB Scorecards](#)


Start With Trust[®]

Southeastern Virginia & Northeastern North Carolina

 
[Filter: Businesses](#) [Source: Site](#) [Discovery: CR](#) [100 Accredited Only](#) 

[GET TO KNOW US](#)
[GET INVOLVED](#)
[GET CONSUMER HELP](#)
[PROGRAMS & SERVICES](#)
[FOR BUSINESSES](#)

Online Complaint Form
Portfolio Recovery Associates, LLC

Step 3: Describe your complaint to us

Complaint Summary (max 150 characters)
 This field should be a 1-2 sentence summary of your online complaint. The complete details of the complaint are not entered in this field.
 150 characters left

Please use the space below to describe your complaint in detail. Please include all the details of the complaint such as Problem Date, Purchase Date, Model Numbers, Order Numbers, Account Numbers, Sales Rep, Payment Amount, Payment Method, and other specific details to this complaint (max 4000 characters).
 4000 characters left

Please choose one of the following desired resolution categories
 Please select from the list [Details...](#)
 Click here for a list of resolutions BBB can assist with.
 Please describe the resolution you are seeking from the business (max 4000 characters):
 4000 characters left

When did you last contact the business regarding this complaint?

Are you willing to speak to the media regarding your concerns?
☐ Yes ☐ No
 This box is intended to allow you to provide special instructions to BBB.
 200 characters left

(How to BBB and complaint resolution process)
[BBB Privacy Policy](#)


BBB
 Division
 Council of Better Business Bureaus
 1400 Market Street
 Suite 1000
 Philadelphia, PA 19104

Hours of Operation
 Monday - Friday
 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
 (215) 399-3000





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Remain professional and keep it brief. Provide only the relevant details. You do not need to repeat every single part of the transaction or any subsequent conversations. Focus on the relevant details of your dispute.

You will have to choose your desired resolution category.

Please choose one of the following desired resolution categories

--- Please select from the list ---

- Modification/discontinuance of an advertised claim
- Billing adjustment
- Contact by the business
- Correction to a credit report**
- Delivery
- No further contact by the business
- Exchange
- Explanation of charges
- Finish the job
- No resolution requested/BBB info only
- Other (requires explanation)
- Refund
- Replacement
- Repair
- Store credit

--- Please select from the list ---

This box is intended to allow you to provide special instructions to BBB

200 characters left

When you are finished with filling out your complaint, press Submit. You will be redirected to a screen that contains all the information you have just submitted.

Thank you for using the Better Business Bureau's Online Complaint System. Your complaint has been assigned case # 40263561. Correspondence regarding this complaint will be emailed to: complaints@credit.com. Please print a copy of this for your records.

Filed on: February 2, 2017

Filed by:
Tom Diaz
473 Main Street
Cuffeeville AL 36626

Filed against:
Portfolio Recovery Associates, LLC

Complaint Description:
Non consectetur enim elit. Nunc venenatis lacus. Vestibulum ante ipsum primis in faucibus orci luctus et ultrices posuere cubile Curae. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Pellentesque congue nisl tellus, et dapibus mauris dapibus sed. Nunc suscipit sed purus eget rhoncus. Cras tristique euismod eros a vulputate. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Ut blandit tempor vehicula. Nam aculitibus augue tortor, pellentesque tempus neque lacina sit. Morbi eget imperdiet risus, imperdiet tempus erat. Supendisse eget elit hend neque. Cras quis ullamcorper urna. Proin et nisi vestib. Phasellus et erat ut sem sodales sollicitudin eget eget odio. In cursus lacine auctor. Quasendisse euismod quis ex ut feugiat. Nam non faucibus dolor, a consectetur tellus. Duis in faucibus libero. Nam vari Nunc tortor. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nam consectetur lorem non fella venenatis lacus. Vestibulum ante ipsum primis in faucibus orci luctus et ultrices posuere cubile Curae.

Your Desired Resolution:
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Pellentesque congue nisl tellus, et dapibus mauris dapibus sed. Nunc suscipit sed purus eget rhoncus. Cras tristique euismod eros a vulputate. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Ut blandit tempor vehicula. Nam aculitibus augue tortor, pellentesque tempus neque lacina sit. Morbi eget imperdiet risus, imperdiet tempus erat. Supendisse eget elit hend neque. Cras quis ullamcorper urna. Proin et nisi vestib. Phasellus et erat ut sem sodales sollicitudin eget eget odio. In cursus lacine auctor. Quasendisse euismod quis ex ut feugiat. Nam non faucibus dolor, a consectetur tellus. Duis in faucibus libero. Nam vari Nunc tortor. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nam consectetur lorem non fella venenatis lacus. Vestibulum ante ipsum primis in faucibus orci luctus et ultrices posuere cubile Curae.

This case will be reviewed by a complaint specialist at the Better Business Bureau, and then forwarded to the business for their response. It is our policy to allow the business 10 working days to respond to your complaint. You will be notified when the business has responded.

What would you like to do next?

View the status of your complaint
Return to the BBB Homepage **BBB Privacy Policy**

The Better Business Bureau

You can click the link at the bottom of this screen that says “View the status of your complaint” in order to upload or add any additional information to the complaint.

BBB CASE#: 48063561

*** If you have information you would like to provide regarding this complaint or need to upload a document, click [here](#)

Complaint filed by: Tom Doe [\(More\)](#)

Complaint filed against: Portfolio Recovery Associates, LLC [\(More\)](#)

Complaint status: Case Received by BBB [\(More\)](#)

Case Description: Nam consetetur lorem non fella venenatis laconia, vestibulum ante ipsum prima in faucibus orci luctus et ultrices posuere cubile Curset... [\(More\)](#)

BBB Designated Category: Billing or Collection Issues

Case opened date: 02/02/2017

Case closed date:

Desired Resolution: Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consetetur elipiscing elit. Fallentesque congue velit tellus, ut dapibus mauris dapibus sed. Nulle suscipit... [\(More\)](#)

Optional: You may download a copy of...
Once you have submitted your response, you
response by clicking the link above

Please make your comments below (max 9000 characters)

9000 characters left

To submit files with this information, click the Browse button

Browse...

No file selected.

Back

Submit

Wait for a response

The BBB will process your complaint as soon as you submit it. Within two business days, they will forward your complaint to the business that you have identified. The business will be expected to reply with fourteen days. If the BBB does not receive a reply within that time, they will make a second request.

When the company responds to the BBB, you will then receive a copy of that response. If the company does not respond, then the BBB will send you a notice that no response was received. If the BBB does not receive a response within 30 days after the filing of your complaint, the complaint will be closed.

If the company submits a response, you will receive a copy of it. The company may agree with your complaint and consent to your requested remedy. Alternatively, the company may stand on its earlier decision.

In Summary

Combining the power of the CFPB, the Attorney General’s Office, and the BBB can put pressure on a collection agency, a creditor, or a credit bureau to do the right thing!

Page 100

Other Types of Letters

Identity Theft Situations

If you discover accounts reporting on your credit reports that you have never had, and, have no knowledge of, you have the right to create an FTC Identity Theft Report. The FTC Identity Theft Report helps you in proving to the creditor that someone stole your identity, and having this report makes it easier to correct problems caused by identity theft.

This letter below can help remove inaccurate information on your credit report. This letter can also be found at <https://www.identitytheft.gov/Sample-Letters/identity-theft-credit-bureau>

(Write to each relevant credit reporting agency, one at a time: Please note that the bureaus fraud addresses are different from the regular dispute addresses.)

Equifax

P.O. Box 105069
Atlanta, GA 30348-5069

Experian

P.O. Box 9554
Allen, TX 75013

TransUnion

Fraud Victim Assistance Department
P.O. Box 2000
Chester, PA 19016

Your Name

Your Address

Credit Bureau Name

Credit Bureau Address

Date

RE: Account Number (if known)

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am a victim of identity theft. The information listed below, which appears on my credit report, does not relate to any transaction(s) that I have made.

It is the result of identity theft.

[Identify item(s) resulting from the identity theft that should be blocked, by name of the source, such as the credit card issuer or bank, and type of item, such as credit account, checking account, etc.]

Please block this information from my credit report, pursuant to section 605B of the Fair Credit Reporting Act, and send the required notifications to all furnishers of this information.

(Letter continued on next page)

(Identity Theft letter continued)

Enclosed are the following:

- A copy of my credit report I received from your company. The fraudulent items are circled.
- A copy of my Identity Theft Report and proof of my identity.
- A copy of section 605B of the Fair Credit Reporting Act, which requires you to block the fraudulent information on my credit report resulting from identity theft within four business days and to promptly notify the furnisher(s) of that information.

I appreciate your prompt attention to this matter, and await your reply.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Enclosures:

Identity Theft Report

Proof of identity: **[a copy of my driver's license/other government-issued identification card/other]**

Copy of Credit Report

FCRA Section 605B **[Print and attach the following 2 pages: <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/pdf-0089-fcra-605b.pdf>]**

Early Exclusion

Although this is not any bureaus official policy or part of the FCRA, the bureaus do allow for requests to exclude negative accounts from reporting on your credit file before the official date that the information is due to be removed.

Requesting an Early Exclusion can work for any negative account reporting on your credit reports but you also need to be aware that if this account is your oldest account reporting, whether early exclusion or if it naturally ages off, your score may drop for losing the age of the account.

Additionally, to use Early Exclusion, you must have a report directly from the bureaus themselves. The reports provided by monitoring services do not provide you with the information you need to be able to utilize this method.

If you disputed your personal information, then you likely received a full report in response to your personal information update request. You can review that report to see if it has the information provided below.

If not, you can always request the bureaus send you a report as you do get one free report every year.

Once you receive your report, you will want to examine each account reporting and look for the section that states something similar to the following: “Estimated month and year that this item will be removed: mo/year”. See below:

WEBBANK/FINGERHUT # [REDACTED] (6250 RIDGEWOOD ROA, SAINT CLOUD, MN 56301)			
We investigated this item, verified it belongs to you, and updated: High Balance appears on your credit report following our investigation.			
Date Opened:	10/11/2010	Date Updated:	02/24/2014
Responsibility:	Individual Account	High Balance:	\$0
Account Type:	Revolving Account	Credit Limit:	\$200
Loan Type:	CHARGE ACCOUNT		
Remarks: >CHAPTER 7 BANKRUPTCY<; DISP INVNG COMP-CONSUM DESIGRS			
Estimated month and year that this item will be removed: 04/2020			

WEBBANK/FINGERHUT Partial Acct # [REDACTED]		6250 RIDGEWOOD	
Date opened	First reported	Recent balance	Payment history
Oct 2010	Apr 2013	Not reported	Jan
Address ID #	Terms	Status	2013
[REDACTED]	Not reported	Discharged through	
Sold to: WEBBANK	Monthly payment	Bankruptcy Chapter	
Type	Not reported	7/Never late	
Charge Card	Credit limit or original	This account is	
Responsibility	amount	scheduled to continue on	
Individual	\$200	record until May 2020.	
	High balance	Comment	
	Not reported	Account information	

What you're looking for is the date the account is scheduled to fall off and compare that date with the following Early Exclusion parameters that each bureau uses.

Transunion – may exclude negative accounts up to 6 months early

Experian – may exclude negative accounts up to 3 months early

Equifax – may exclude negative accounts up to 1 or 2 months early

If you determine that you have an account that is scheduled to be removed within the above guidelines, and it is reporting on your credit reports, you can send the following letter to the appropriate bureau.

If the account is not removed after sending this letter you can contact the bureau(s) and request to speak to a representative in the United States and then explain you're not disputing the account but asking for an early exclusion.

Your Name

Your Address

Credit Bureau Name

Credit Bureau Address

Date

ATTN: SUPERVISOR ONLY

RE: Account Number #0000

To Whom It May Concern,

In reviewing my credit report I noticed the above mentioned account fell within your EARLY EXCLUSION time frame. Therefore, please note that this letter is NOT a dispute of the above mentioned account.

Please do NOT initiate a dispute of the account.

1. [Insert Account Name]
Account Number #0000

Please exclude it from my credit report early.

Please review the above mentioned account and the attached reporting of the item which shows the date by which it is scheduled to be removed from my reports. Please note that the date falls within your range for early exclusion.

I would like to formally request that ACCOUNT NAME ACCOUNT NUMBER XXXXX**** be excluded from my report.

Thank you for your time and help in this matter.

Sincerely,
Your Name

What To Do When A Deleted Credit Item Is Re-Inserted

Congratulations! You've managed to remove negative items from your credit report! Your work is not done though. You must continually monitor your credit reports in case the company gets sneaky and re-inserts a negative item.

When you challenged your derogatory/unsubstantiated/inaccurate items, the creditors and/or credit bureaus had 30 days to complete their investigation pursuant to your dispute. If the item cannot be verified within 30 days then they would remove it because they are not allowed to maintain information that is unverifiable. However, if the item is verified on day 31 or any day afterward, the creditors can re-report, and the credit bureau can reinsert the item in your credit reports.

If a previously removed item is reinserted, the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) requires that the credit reporting agency notify you no later than five business days after the date of reinsertion. This FCRA requirement is rarely followed. Additionally, the creditor who reinserts the negative item must also certify the information is correct.

Here is the exact law pertaining to this situation:

15 U.S. Code § 1681i - FCRA 611 (a)(5)(B)(ii)

Notice to consumer:

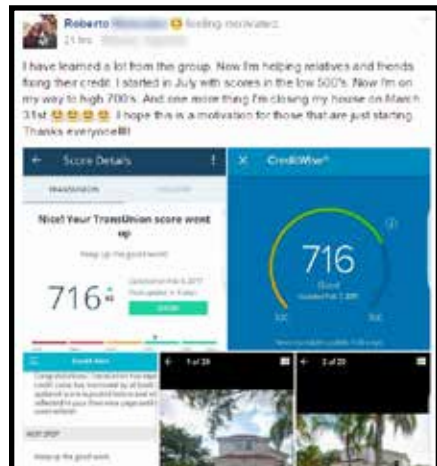
If any information that has been deleted from a consumer's file pursuant to subparagraph (A) is

reinserted in the file, the consumer reporting agency shall notify the consumer of the reinsertion in writing not later than 5 business days after the reinsertion or, if authorized by the consumer for that purpose, by any other means available to the agency.

If you find a previously deleted item has been re-inserted, by the exact same creditor/collection agency, without written notification, you could send the **5 Day Re-insertin Letter**.

You can also initiate a complaint with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. The complaint would be against the credit bureau. They will not ignore an inquiry from the CFPB.

Alternatively, you could also file a small claims lawsuit against the credit bureau for re-inserting the item without notice, in violation of the Fair Reporting Credit Act (FCRA) § 611 (15 U.S.C. § 1681i)(a)(5)(B)(ii).



5 Day Reinsertion Letter

Send to the credit bureau if an item is removed and later placed back on your credit report.

Your Name

Your Address

Credit Bureau Name

Credit Bureau Address

Date

RE: Last 4 of SSN 0000

To Whom It May Concern,

On [insert date of original letter] I disputed an account reported by [insert name of collection agency, creditor or court] in the file you maintain under my Social Security number.

I was informed on [insert date of deletion] that the item was deleted from my credit report.

Now I have discovered that the item has been reinserted on my credit report.

In accordance with the requirements of the FCRA section 611(a)(5)(B) (ii), you are required to notify me of the reinsertion in writing within 5 business days.

(B)Requirements relating to reinsertion of previously deleted material

(ii)Notice to consumer

If any information that has been deleted from a consumer's file pursuant to subparagraph (A) is reinserted in the file, the consumer reporting agency shall notify the consumer of the reinsertion in writing not later than 5 business days after the reinsertion or, if authorized by the consumer for that purpose, by any other means available to the agency.

I received no such notification. This is a very serious violation of the FCRA, and I reserve the right to pursue legal action for your blatant disregard for the law.

I hereby demand that you immediately delete the item from my credit report in order to avoid legal action. I am submitting this complaint separately to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, the Attorney General's Office, and the BBB.

Please govern yourself accordingly.

Your Name (typed not signed)

Your Address

Cc: Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

Cc: Attorney General's Office

Cc: Better Business Bureau



Goodwill Letter

Sometimes you may have an open account with a creditor that is mostly on favorable terms. In that case, you may not want to ruffle their feathers too much. But perhaps you have 1 or 2 late pays on the account that are hurting you.

For that scenario, we recommend a goodwill letter, where you politely ask

for forgiveness. We also suggest that you locate the contact information for the CEO of the company and send the letter directly to him/her. Please note that if you start with this letter, you've admitted fault and cannot go back and dispute the late payments. A Goodwill Letter is an admission of guilt

Your Name

Your Address

Creditor Name

Creditor Address

Date

RE: Account # (insert account number)

To Whom It May Concern,

I'm writing to you because I noticed that my most recent credit report contains a late payment reported on [insert date(s)] for my [insert company name] account.

I want you to know that I understand, and have great respect for my financial obligations.

Unfortunately, at the time of the incident mentioned above, I had [insert circumstance that caused you to miss a payment – hospital stay/injury/job loss/etc]. Aside from this unforeseen and unavoidable circumstance, you will see that I have an excellent payment record.

In the near future, I am planning on applying for [insert something like a mortgage/auto loan/loan for my daughter's wedding], and it has come to my attention that the missed payment on my credit reports could hurt my ability to qualify.

In my heart, I know that the missed payment doesn't reflect my creditworthiness and commitment to repaying my debts. I am humbly asking for you to give me a second chance by making a goodwill adjustment to remove the late payment on [insert date(s)] from my credit reports. As I understand it, you can do so in just a few minutes of your time. I would greatly appreciate it!

Thank you for your consideration.

Have a blessed day!

Best,

Your Name (typed not signed)

Incomplete/Missing Info Letter

If you acknowledge that a negative item is definitely yours, you can always opt to challenge it in a different way, instead of just saying “not mine”. If that’s the case, you can send a version of the letter below to get it removed on a technicality, such as missing or incomplete information. One of our favorites is challenging an item based on an incorrect account number, as some credit bureaus report an account number something like this: Acct # 12345XXXXX

It is said that they may be doing this for your privacy protection, but the FTC opinion letter here says quite the opposite: <https://www.ftc.gov/policy/advisory-opinions/advisory-opinion-darcy-06-30-00>

“In sum, it is our view that a CRA

that always scrambles or truncates account (or social security) numbers does not technically comply with Section 609 because it does not provide “accurate” (and perhaps not “clear”) disclosure of “all information” in the file.”

They basically state that by not reporting the entire account number, they are not reporting 100% accurate information as required by section 609 of the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

This letter should not replace Part 1 Letter 1 and the dispute reasons listed in that section.

Send to the credit bureau to remove incomplete items (for example an incorrect acct #, balance, incorrect or missing status).

Your Name

Your Address

Credit Bureau Name

Credit Bureau Address

Date

RE: Last 4 of SSN 0000

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to challenge the reporting and compliance on an account with [insert company name] that is being reported on my credit report with incorrect/missing info.

More specifically, I am referencing the fact that you are reporting

[insert condition such as “an incorrect high balance”, “an incorrect account number”, “an undated late pay”, “a missing field of [insert missing field here such as status]”, “the wrong account type”, “an incorrect credit limit”, “a late pay after account was closed”, “an inaccurate date of last activity”, “an inaccurate date of last update”, “a charge off listed as “open”, “a collection account with a limit”, “an inaccurate reporting date”].

(Letter continued on next page)

(Incomplete/Missing Info letter continued)

Your improper procedures are highly damaging to my credit score. Please immediately delete this item.

Your Name (printed or typed, not signed)

Address

Cc: Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

Cc: Attorney General's Office

Cc: Better Business Bureau

Returned Mail Letter

Sometimes you may mail a letter to a creditor or collection agency, using the address shown on your credit report. If that mail comes back returned as undeliverable, you may have grounds for removal. After all, the credit bureau is not allowed to report anything they know to be

false, including addresses. In that case, you could send the following letter.

Send to the credit bureau to dispute an item that came back as returned mail when you contacted the creditor or collection agency.

Your Name

Your Address

Credit Bureau Name

Credit Bureau Address

Date

RE: Last 4 of SSN: 0000

To Whom It May Concern,

There is currently an inaccurate item being reported on my credit report from [insert company name]. I have contacted this company at the address listed on my credit report here:

[insert address here]

As you can see, I have enclosed a photocopy of my mail being returned from the post office due to an invalid address. Section 623(a)(1)(A) prohibits furnishing information to any CRA if the furnisher “knows or has reasonable cause to believe that the information is inaccurate.”

Given that the furnisher has provided false information to you about me, and provided you with a false address, I demand that the item they are reporting be removed immediately.

Your Name (printed or typed, not signed)

Address

Alternative/Bizarre Letter

This final letter is a bizarre letter that just works many times. We have no reason to explain it other than it was provided to us by a mathematician who wishes to remain anonymous. He has sent over 45,000 dispute letters to the credit bureaus and noted which keywords and phrases resulted in the most removals. We have verified that this letter does

indeed work very often.

Can be used for most circumstances, sent to the credit bureau – note that the misspellings and grammar errors are on purpose – this letter is highly effective at making the bureau's automated systems not comprehend, therefore requiring a real employee to review (and hopefully remove) it.

Your Name

Your Address

Credit Bureau Name

Credit Bureau Address

Date

RE: Last 4 of SSN: 0000 and account reported from [insert company name] with account # [insert account #]

ALL REPORTED DATA MUST BE COMPLETE,CORRECT,AND PROVEN IF CHALLENGED.I DO NOT GRANT YOU AUTHORITY TO REPORT VERSUS ME WITHOUT ADEQUATE COMPLIANCE OF STATE AND FEDERAL LAWS BEING APPLICABLE THROUGHOUT. AS SUCH I DEMAND DELETION IMMEDIATELY OF YOUR DECLARED CLAIMS AGAINST ME.PER COMMON LAW,YOU ARE DEMANDED TO DEMONSTRATE THAT YOU CAN AND HAVE WILLINGNESS TO ABSOLUTELY VERIFY AND VALIDATE (OR JUST SAY "CERTIFICATE") EVERY AND ONE EVEN EACH ANY AND OR ALL ALLEGATIONS YET PHYSICALLY DEFICIENT OR UNPROVEN MINE, CHALLENGED OR NOT.NOTE THE UNLAWFULNESS AND VILE INFRINGEMENT CREATED POTENTIALLY VERSUS ME SHOULD YOU CONTINUE TO RETAIN REPORT RESTRUCTURE RESELL RETURN OR ELSE WISE EVERY AND ONE EVEN EACH ANY OR ALL DATA ,NOTATIONS ,DATES, BALANCES ,CALCULATIONS, AUDITS, ACCOUNTING RECORDS,REQUISITE 426-CHARACTER FORMAT FIELD P6 STATEMENT(S), MANDATED 386 PARCELS OF CONFIRMATION NECESSARY TO REPORT A COLLECTION ACTIVITY

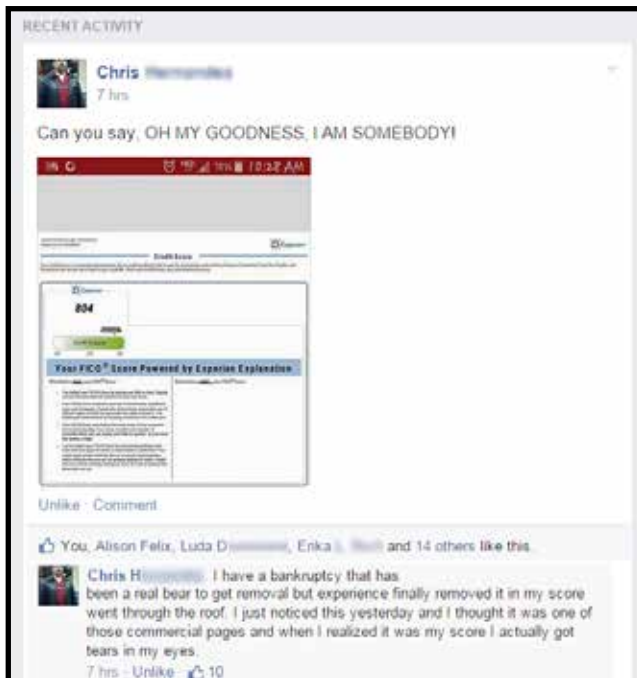
(Letter continued on next page)

Chapter 3: Advanced Tactics

(Alternative/Bizarre letter continued)

AND OR DEBT ALLEGED, THE MINIMAL FIVE (5) PORTIONED PERSONAL IDENTIFIERS, THE ALPHA-/ NUMERIC-/AND OR ALPHA-NUMERIC SOURCE CODE(S),AS WELL AS EVERY AND ONE EVEN ANY OR ALL REGISTRATIONS,ACTS,ARTICLES,PARAGRAPHS,-STATEMENTS,REGULATIONS, OBLIGATIONS OR OTHERWISE REQUIRED,WHETHER MENTIONED OR NOT.ANNUL IN BRIEF TODAY EVEN RIGHT NOW AND DO SO THEREAFTER MINUS ANY RESULTANT PREJUDICES AND OR INJURIES TO ME, REAL OR IMAGINED, WITHAL.

Your Name (printed or typed, not signed)



Chapter 4: Lawsuits

None of this is legal advice! Always seek out a lawyer if you are looking for legal advice. (preferably one who specializes in FCRA or FDCPA law)

Alternatively check out LegalShield for low cost legal advice:

<http://creditsecret.org/legalshield>

Small Claims Court

If the credit bureaus, creditors or collection agencies are not following the law, not responding, not providing legitimate proof, within the required timeframes, harassing you, etc, and you are fed up with sending letters, you can opt to file a small claims lawsuit.

Keep in mind that most of the people reading this will never need to resort to this.

But some members have found success with going down to their local courthouse and filing a "Small Claims Lawsuit". It typically costs very little to file a small claims suit, and it only takes a few minutes.

The cost to file depends on how much you are suing for. FCRA rules allow for up to \$1,000 per violation.

However, it has always been our belief that the amount is irrelevant because the goal is not to win money - the goal is to win removal of the negative/unverifiable/inaccurate item.

So you could always sue for a small amount, because even if you win \$100, you will likely win removal as well. And if not, you can use the

judgment as leverage to get removal.

Now the important thing is to not get nervous. You will not likely have to go to court. Most cases are settled well before the trial date, or through court mandated mediation, where a court appointed mediator will try to get both sides to come to an amicable resolution.

If you do find yourself required to appear, due to not settling prior, we recommend visiting your local courthouse to watch how other cases are handled. That way you will be familiar with the procedures.

One other advantage of small claims action is that the creditor/collection agency or credit bureau is required to come to you. Meaning they will need to fly out to your location to defend themselves. That could be a great expense for them. Given that small claims actions are not allowed to cover attorney fees, if they send a legal team, even if they win the case, you would not be liable to pay their attorney fees.

To find the small claims court nearest you, simply do a Google search for "small claims court" in your city or state and follow the directions, as each state is different. Sometimes they charge you a higher filing fee, depending on how much you are suing for. So you may want to just do the minimum, since the goal is not to win any money, it's to get your derogatory/unfair/inaccurate items removed.

Examples of What You Could Potentially File Suit For and Against Whom

Who	Reason	Law	Fine
Creditors, if they report your credit history inaccurately.	Defamation, financial injury	US Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit, No. 00-15946, Nelson vs. Chase Manhattan	Extent of damages incurred by the wronged party as deemed by the courts.
Creditors, if you dispute a debt, and they fail to report it as disputed to the credit bureaus.	Protection under the FCRA	FCRA Section 623	\$1,000
Creditors, if they pull your credit file without permissible purpose.	Injury to your credit report and credit score	FCRA Section 604(A)(3)	\$1,000
Credit bureaus, if they refuse to correct information after being provided proof of inaccuracy.	Defamation, willful injury	FCRA Section 623 CUSHMAN, v. TRANS UNION CORPORATION US Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit Court Case 115 F.3d 220 June 9, 1997, Filed (D.C. No. 95-cv-01743).	Extent of damages incurred by the wronged party, as deemed by the courts.
Credit bureaus, if they reinsert a deleted item from your credit report without notifying you in writing within 5 business days.	Consumer protection afforded by the FCRA	FCRA Part (A)(5)(B)(ii)	\$1,000
Credit bureaus, if they fail to respond to your written disputes within 30 days (a 15 day extension may be granted if they receive information from the creditor within the first 30 days).	Consumer protection afforded by the FCRA	FCRA Section 611 Part (A)(1)	\$1,000

Examples Continued

Who	Reason	Law	Fine
Creditors, collection agencies, or credit bureaus, if they "Re-Age" your account by reporting the date of last activity instead of the date of first delinquency.	Consumer protection afforded by the FCRA	FCRA Section 605(c)	\$1,000
Collection agency, if they fail to report a disputed debt to the credit bureaus.	Protection under the FDCPA	FDCPA Section 807(8)	\$1,000
Collection Agency, if they do not validate your debt yet continue to pursue collection activity by filing for a judgment.	Consumer protection afforded by the FDCPA	FDCPA Section 809(b), FTC opinion letter Cass from LeFevre .	\$1,000
Collection Agency, if you have sent them a cease and desist letter and they still call you.	Consumer protection afforded by the FDCPA	FDCPA Section 805(c)	\$1,000
Collection Agency, if they have not validated your debt and they still continue to report to the credit bureaus.	Consumer protection afforded by the FDCPA	FDCPA Section 809(b) FTC opinion letter Cass from LeFevre	\$1,000
Collection Agency, if they call you after 9 PM at night or before 8 AM.	Consumer protection afforded by the FDCPA	FDCPA Section 805(a)(1)	\$1,000
Collection Agency, if they call you at work when you have advised them that you do not want these calls.	Consumer protection afforded by the FDCPA	FDCPA Section 805(a)(3)	\$1,000

Examples Continued

Who	Reason	Law	Fine
Collection Agency, if they call any third party about your debt such as friends, neighbors, relatives.	Consumer protection afforded by the FDCPA	FDCPA Section 805(b)	\$1,000
Collection agency, if they use any kind of harassment or abuse.	Consumer protection afforded by the FDCPA	FDCPA Section 806	\$1,000
Collector cannot claim to seize property or have you arrested.	Consumer protection afforded by the FDCPA	FDCPA Section 807	\$1,000
Collector must be in the county in which you lived when you signed the original contract for the debt or where you live at the time when they file the lawsuit.	Consumer protection afforded by the FDCPA	FDCPA Section 811(a)(2)	\$1,000

NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Tips During Court

Bring a 3 ring binder of proof - all examples of where you believe the defendant violated your rights. Use a highlighter on the main points. This may include letters you sent, their replies, copies of your credit reports, and anything dated like a certified mail receipt.

Print out and highlight the sections of the FCRA or FDCPA that you believe they violated.

The judge may ask to review your evidence, and may even keep your binder for a few days to arrive at a decision later once they have brushed up on the specific laws you are claiming - make it easy for them!

Include a summary of bullet points that you can refer to, with the top points you'd like to get across.

Do NOT get emotional or waste anyone's time. Simply state the facts.

If the other side doesn't show up, the judge may still ask to hear your evidence. If they do, make sure that you ask for a default judgment! Some judges won't issue it unless you ask for it.

If you can prove damages, you will typically be in a better position. Examples of damages may be: denial of credit, being forced to pay higher interest rates, etc. Also, as in many example cases you will find later in this chapter, mental anguish and humiliation can be considered as actual damages.

Here are some examples of things that could conceivably happen in a small claims courtroom:

Example Scenarios

Defendant: "Your honor, here is a bill (or other document) that shows the plaintiff did not pay X amount."

Answer: "Objection: no foundation" - this means you haven't established the authenticity or accuracy of a piece of evidence.

Defendant: "Your honor, mr./mrs. X opened an account with X company on X date."

Answer: "Objection" - "Was the defendant/attorney personally present when the alleged account was opened on X date? How does he/she have firsthand knowledge? If they weren't there then this is hearsay."

Defendant: presents the court with a document and says "Is this your signature?"

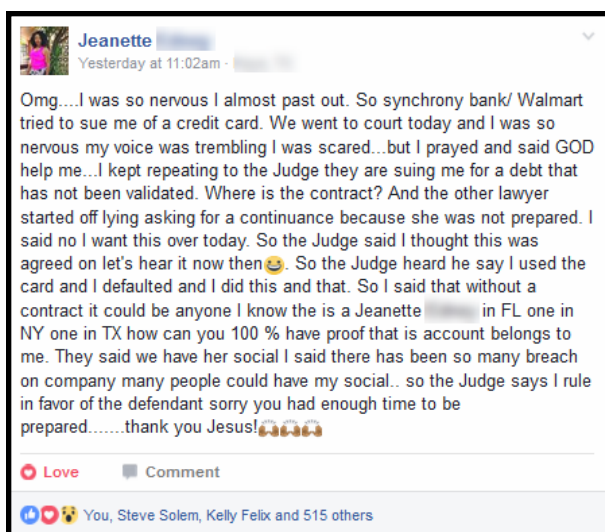
Answer: "Let the record show I am looking at what appears to be an 8.5 by 11 inch piece of white paper with what appears to be some sort of photocopy on it. Based on the way you asked the question, and if I understand you correctly, I would have to say no - I have never seen this piece of paper or photocopy before, so I cannot determine with absolute certainty whether or not the document is authentic or if that is my signature."

Mediation

Some states require or recommend mediation prior to actually hearing a case - keep in mind that the mediator may know the defendant's attorney personally, and it may not be in your best interests to give up if they tell you that you "don't have a case". Giving up during or after mediation is completely up to you, but it is a guaranteed loss rather than learning from the meeting and being better prepared for the actual court date.

What to do if YOU Are Sued

Whether you have been served with a lawsuit or you will in the future, the most important thing to remember is - ANSWER IT.



Some debt collectors are notorious for filing dozens of cases every day against people they want to collect from, knowing that most won't show up. A no-show can turn into a default judgment, and a judgment can turn into wage garnishment and all sorts of issues.

Here is a great article from a law firm in New Jersey about the DO's and DON'Ts of getting sued, especially

Member Stories

Here is what one of our successful members mentioned about his own court date when he was sued:



M [redacted] I got sued before and I went to court and my defense was I've had lots of credit cards so I'm not sure if thats mine . Can they provide my signature as proof that that account is mine. They showed all kinds of o/s bills and statements and asked if I recognized them . I said I can't be sure.since I've had lots of credit cards. Can they provide a signature to prove thats mine. They didn't have the signature so the case was dismissed.

Unlike · Reply · 👍 9 · 20 hrs

as it relates to collections:

<http://yournjattorneys.com/pressler-and-pressler-lawsuit-dos-and-donts> (we are not affiliated with this company)

Another great article about being sued can be found here:

<https://toughnickel.com/personal-finance/You-Can-Beat-Credit-Card-Debt-Collectors>

Here are a few interesting stories regarding big collection agencies such as Midland Funding and Portfolio Associates:

<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2010/4/5/854290> - woman sues debt collector and wins \$8.1 million

<http://blog.credit.com/2015/09/2-of-americas-largest-debt-collectors-will-refund-60-million-to-consumers-125132> - federal regulators force 2 debt collectors to refund \$60 million

And here are some cases you may want to review using Google (some of these might be helpful to have in your binder if you go to court) - you can always Google “FCRA cases” or FDCPA cases” to get an expanded list of recent important cases as well.

Liability

Spears/Brennan Appeal from the Marion Superior Court - The judge ruled the following: “As discussed previously, an FDCPA claim has nothing to do with whether the



underlying debt is valid. An FDCPA claim concerns the method of collecting the debt. It does not arise out of the transaction creating the debt [.] Azar, 874 F. Supp. at 1318. Footnote: See 15 U.S.C. § 1692k (governing civil liability under the Act).

Cushman v. Trans Union Corp., 920 F. Supp. 80 (E.D. Pa. 1996) or Cushman v. Trans Union Corp., 115 F.3d 220 (3d Cir. 1997) - TransUnion found liable.

Richardson v. Fleet Bank of Massachusetts – the court held that the Fleet Bank failed to follow reasonable procedures by relying on creditors for accurate credit information because the company had reason to know of the dispute between the consumer and the company.

Bryant v. TRW – the Defendant consumer reporting agency unsuccessfully argued that, under §607(b) of the FCRA, 15 U.S.C. §1681 et seq., it was not liable as a matter of law, for reports it issued in good faith, and as a result of inaccurate information provided to it by Plaintiff's creditors. The court held that Defendant was not

free from liability when the credit reports at issue was not accurate. Once inaccuracy was determined, defendant's agency procedures were determined to be not reasonable to ensure maximum possible accuracy, pursuant to §§607(b).

Damages

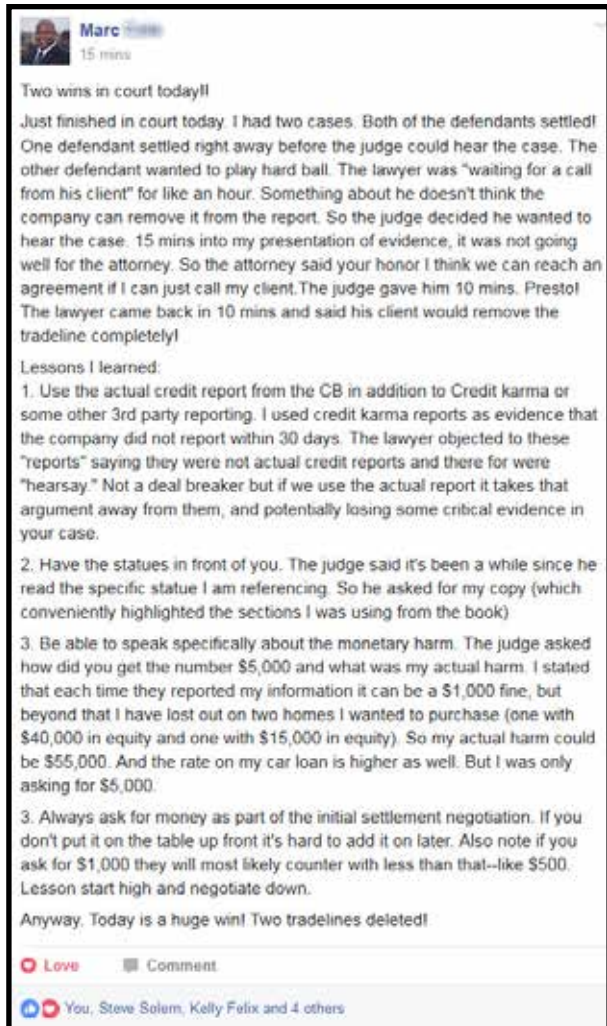
In **Bryant v. TRW, Inc.**, 487 F.Supp. 1234, 1242-43 (E.D.Mich.1980), the district court awarded a consumer \$8,000 for anguish resulting from denials of a mortgage due to inaccurate credit reports. The Sixth Circuit affirmed. 689 F.2d 72 (6th Cir.1982).

Fischl v. General Motors Acceptance Corp., 708 F.2d 143, 151 (5th Cir.1983). – Actual damages include humiliation or mental distress, even if the consumer has suffered no out-of-pocket losses.

In **Pinner**, 805 F.2d at 1265, the consumer was awarded \$25,000 for mental distress because of the humiliation and embarrassment

resulting from three credit denials and from lengthy dealings with the credit bureau.

Thompson v. San Antonio Retail Merchants Ass'n, 682 F.2d 509, 513-14 (5th Cir.1982). – The consumer received \$10,000 because of humiliation and embarrassment suffered from three denials of credit



Chapter 4: Lawsuits

and from the fact that the credit bureau took several months to correct the credit report's inaccuracies.

In **Collins v. Retail Credit Co., 410 F.Supp. 924, 936 (E.D.Mich.1976)**, the court awarded a consumer \$21,750 for embarrassment and humiliation.

In **Morris v. Credit Bureau of Cincinnati, Inc., 563 F.Supp. 962, 969 (S.D.Ohio 1983)**, the consumer was awarded \$10,000 for anguish and embarrassment even though, after he was denied credit, he explained the inaccuracies on his credit report and subsequently obtained credit.



In **Millstone v. O'Hanlon Reports, Inc., 528 F.2d 829, 834-35 (8th Cir.1976)**, the Eighth Circuit upheld an award of \$2,500 for mental anguish after an insurer canceled the consumer's policy because of an inaccurate credit report.



Finding a Registered Agent

A registered agent is a responsible third-party who is registered in the same state in which a business entity was established. A registered agent is also the person who will receive service of process notices, notice of lawsuits, correspondence from the Secretary of State, and other official government notifications. Sometimes these terms: registered agents, statutory agents, resident agents, service of process agents, and corporate agents are all used to designate the same thing.

The bottom line is that a registered agent exists to be available during certain business hours to accept service of process on behalf of a corporate entity, the first procedural step for filing a lawsuit. This is the address you will use to serve the creditor, collection agency, or credit bureau that you are suing in small claims court.

You can look up any registered agent of any corporate entity by doing a business name search online or by using a site such as <http://www.registeredagentinfo.com>

Choose which state you reside in, and then search

the business name in the box provided. You may have to start with a small portion of the name in order to drill down to the exact business

When filing suit against a credit bureau, some folks have reported success by sending a copy of the lawsuit directly to a high-up person at the related credit bureau, as well as the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

CC:

Kristen Donoghue
Assistant Director of Enforcement
Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
1700 G. Street NW
Washington, D.C. 2055

Equifax Corporation
John J. Kelley III
Corporate Vice President, Chief Legal Officer
Office of the General Counsel
1550 Peachtree St
NE Atlanta, GA 30309

Daniel Halvorsen
TransUnion Corp.
Sr. Attorney GROUP General Counsel
Office of the General Counsel
555 W. Adams Street
Chicago IL 60661

Experian North America
Darryl Gibson
Group General Counsel
Office of the Corporate Counsel
475 Anton Blvd.
Costa Mesa, CA 92626



best advised to get an attorney. You can do a search online for “FCRA attorney” or “FDCPA attorney” plus the name of your state, in order to find someone who can help you. Many of those types of lawyers do not charge a fee unless they win or get the other side to settle.

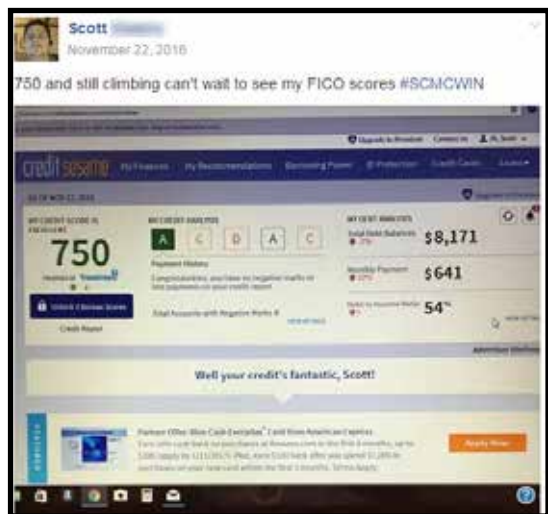
Or you can go to <http://www.creditsecret.org/legalshield>

entity. For example, Transunion’s exact business name is “TRANS UNION LLC” so sometimes it is trial and error to get the correct registered agent.

Once you find the registered agent you will send a certified letter to that registered agent at their registered office address, or hire a process server to hand deliver your notice or complaint to them.

Now keep in mind that sometimes you may not be able to find their registered agent, and the defendant may not have a location in your state. A handful of small claims courts may not allow you to sue without that information. In that unlikely event, you may need to consider filing in district court, and for that you would be

You should have a good opportunity to file locally based on the Fair Debt Collection Practices Improvement Act of 1999: Most courts have held that FDCPA litigation is appropriately filed within the district where the consumer received the communication. Officers and managers of the debt collector who



have control over the procedures complained of may also be sued there. Filing in the district where the letter was received has been upheld even where the debt collector's letter had been forwarded to a district in which it did not do business.

Another tactic we've seen occasionally is that a defendant may try to get your lawsuit moved from small claims court over to federal court if you are suing based on the FCRA or FDCPA which are both federal laws. In that event, you may want to edit your suit, or just be prepared in advance, by additionally suing for a "state" law that is very similar to the federal law. Each state has its own laws that are very similar to the FCRA and FDCPA. You can do



a search online for "debt collection laws in my state" or "credit reporting laws in my state", and add those to your complaint if you desire. You can either do it when you file, or amend your suit later if the defendant tries to move it to federal court. Just keep in mind that this is a rare occurrence.

Member Stories

Here is another way one of our members kept a lawsuit in his local court:



P [REDACTED] What makes it all good to sue LOCALLY ...is that you sent a letter of dispute from your address (state) and they usually respond- to you back at your address- therefore; the claim is allowable because in the process of them failing in marking item disputed(99.9) YOU were injured..because you lost opportunity because your credit sucked so bad you couldn't get any good credit with low interest rates or a home loan. ANNNNNNNNNDDDD because TO dispute is your right under FCRA they are held liable under it and the FDCPA..in smalls claims in your local court.. I argued this against a change of venue to arbitration by the original contract...and the Judge agreed with me...as such that We start our Dispute in our house/our address, The issue becomes How they are REPORTING rather than the DEBT they suppose we owe.....they come face us for Violation of FCRA.

Unlike · Reply · 1 · 4 hrs · Edited

ChexSystems Removals

ChexSystems is the “credit bureau” for checking accounts. Most people typically never hear about ChexSystems until they’ve been denied a new bank account or they aren’t allowed to write a check at the store. ChexSystems is a consumer reporting agency (CRA) that tracks your checking and savings account activity. About 80 percent of all financial institutions across the United States use ChexSystems data for

See the table below for a summary of the information that banks and merchants report to ChexSystems, and how long it remains on your report.

Activity	Description	When It’s Deleted
Involuntary Account Closure	Bank closes your account usually “for cause” (e.g., writing too many bad checks or fraud)	After 5 years (unless you successfully dispute the listing or the bank or ChexSystems deletes the listing sooner)
Bounced Checks and/or Overdrafts	Usually for multiple instances	
Unpaid Negative Balances	Usually for outstanding overdraft/nonsufficient funds (NSF) fees or other charges	
Savings Account, Debit Card or ATM Abuse	For risky or dishonest behavior (e.g., depositing empty envelopes at ATM or frequently exceeding transfer limit)	
Outstanding Checks in SCAN Database of Returned Checks & Instances of Fraud	Checks issued or sent to a collection agency; returned or fraudulent checks	
Suspected Fraud or Identity Theft	For altering checks or providing false information on an application	
Inquiries	Initiated by you, a bank, an employer, a creditor, or other “permitted” party	After 90 days or no more than 3 years if initiated by you; otherwise after 5 years
Lost Checks & Debit Cards	Routine reporting (not necessarily negative information but can indicate possible fraud)	After 5 years (except check-ordering and application histories and unless you successfully dispute the listing or the bank or ChexSystems deletes the listing sooner)
Check-Ordering History from Past 3 Years		
Number of Accounts Applied for in Past 90 Days		
Social Security Number/ Driver’s License Validation and/or Verification		

screening your applications. Others use a similar service called TeleCheck. If your application for a checking account gets rejected, it means there is a negative record on your checking account history.

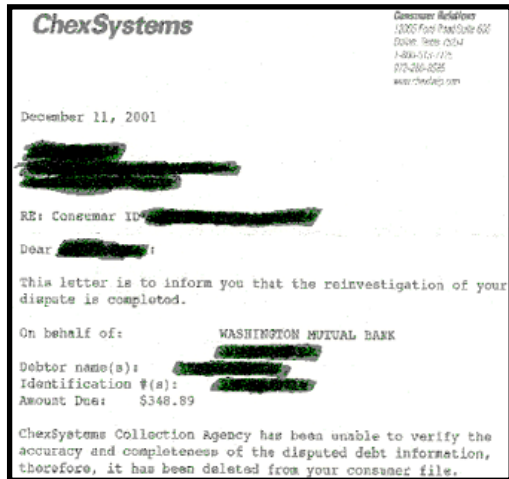
Are You In ChexSystems?

ChexSystems maintains a database of individuals who have written some bad checks, have overdrafted their account for too long, etc. Once you get on their list, you won't be able to open a checking account at most banks in the United States.

To make matter worse, there is no standard definition as to what constitutes "fraud" or "account abuse," according to the National Consumer Law Center. ChexSystems won't distinguish whether you were the victim or the perpetrator if there is a "suspected fraud" mark on your report.

Correcting Errors In ChexSystems

If you believe you have erroneous, unverifiable, or unfair information in your ChexSystem record, you can follow the very same steps as in chapter 2. When preparing your letters, the bank that reported you to



ChexSystems can be considered the "creditor", and ChexSystems can be considered the "credit bureau".

How To Get A Copy Of Your ChexSystems Report

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA), you are entitled to a free copy of your report once every 12 months or if you've been rejected by a bank in the past 60 days.

Did you know?

ChexSystems must adhere to the FCRA - just like the other credit bureaus. Therefore similar letters can be used - i.e. P1L1 to the bank itself, and P2L1 to ChexSystems

ChexSystems Continued

Method	Requirement	Contact Info
Online (Report Only)	Complete an Online Request Form https://www.consumerdebit.com/consumerinfo/us/en/chexsystems/report/index.htm	consumerdebit.com
By Phone (Report Only)	Follow the instructions of the automated system	800-428-9623
By Fax (Report Only)	Print and complete an Order Form https://www.consumerdebit.com/consumerinfo/us/en/Printable%20Order%20Form.pdf	602-659-2197
By Mail (Report or Score)	For Report: Print and complete an Order Form https://www.consumerdebit.com/consumerinfo/us/en/Printable%20Order%20Form.pdf For Score: Print and complete a Score Order Form https://www.consumerdebit.com/consumerinfo/us/en/chexsystems/disclosure/InquiryForm.pdf Enclose a check/money order for \$10.50 made payable to ChexSystems, Inc.	ChexSystems, Inc. Attn: Consumer Relations 7805 Hudson Rd., Ste. 100 Woodbury, MN 55125



Pro Tip: Check Your Information!

You have the right to dispute any information contained in your consumer file at ChexSystems.

ChexSystems must adhere to the FCRA - just like the other credit bureaus. Therefore similar letters can be used - i.e. P1L1 to the bank itself, and P2L1 to ChexSystems

Keep a copy for your files and send the letter registered mail.

Your Name

Your Address

City, State Zip

ChexSystems
Customer Relations
7805 Hudson Road, Suite 100
Woodbury, MN 55125

RE: Your SSN

Date:

To Whom It May Concern:

My bank has informed me that there is negative information reported by [insert name of bank] included in the file ChexSystems maintains under my Social Security Number. Upon ordering a copy of the report, I see an entry from this bank listing [insert reason for denial and date]. Please validate this information with [insert name of bank] and provide me with copies of any documentation associated with [insert reason for denial]. In the absence of any such documentation bearing my signature, I ask that this information be immediately deleted from the file you maintain under my Social Security Number.

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Your Name

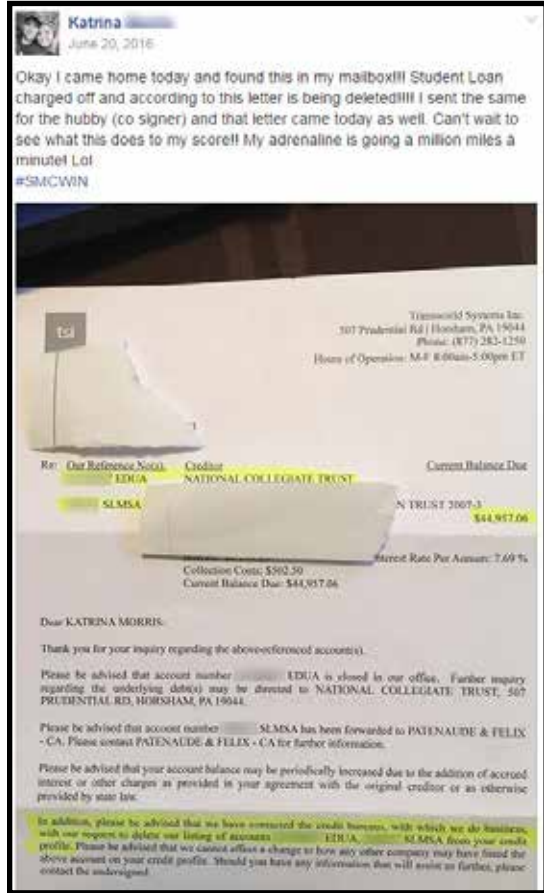
Dealing with Student Loans

If you defaulted on your student loans, you should also know that there is not a statute of limitations on student loan debt. Your loan company can keep trying to collect forever. Bankruptcy does not erase student loans either.

Private vs Government Loans

Although you can dispute student loans for removal from your credit reports, the fact that you owe the government money means the loans will always be a debt that is collectible. Many of our members have been successful with removing student loans from their credit report, that are reporting negatively. For this you would use Part 2 Letter 1 in Chapter 2.

However, if your student loan was from a private lender, those debts would be treated the same way as any other creditor/collection account and you would dispute the private loan company with the Part 1 letters found at the beginning of Chapter 2.



Multiple Loans on Your Credit Reports

Many members see multiple student loans reporting on their credit reports even though they only took out one loan. The reason this happens is because each disbursement is treated as a new loan. Each time you take out a new student loan a new and separate account is opened. By the time you graduate, you

could have as many as eight individual loans now showing up on your credit reports for a standard, four-year undergraduate degree. One degree, up to eight separate loans appearing on your credit reports.

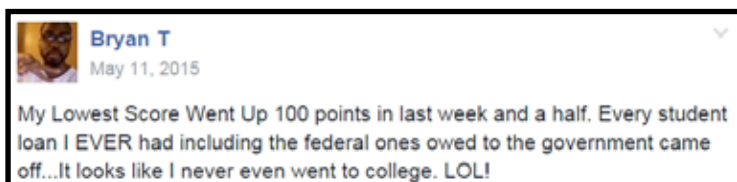
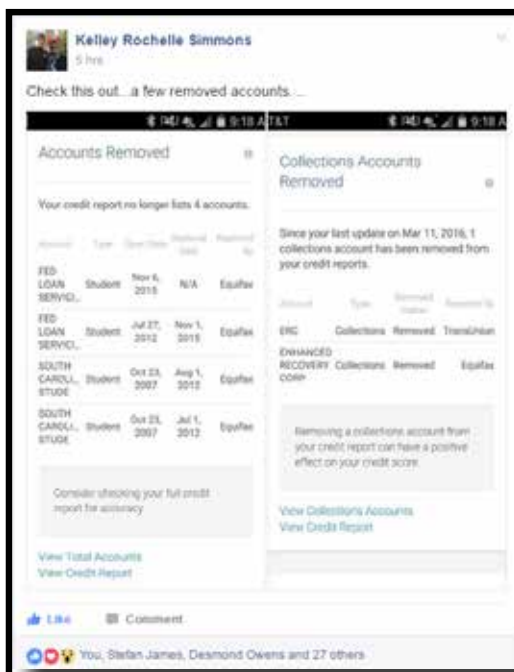
If your student loans are combined into a single billing group, whenever you make a payment to your student loan servicer, that payment is divided and distributed among each of your individual accounts. So when your payment is received on time, all of the loans are reported as “on time” or “pays as agreed” to the credit bureaus. However, if you fail to send a payment into your student loan servicer on time, then you could wind up with late payments reported on not just one account, but on every student loan on your credit reports.

Depending on your circumstances, you might be able to get your payments deferred, get a forbearance agreement from your lender, consolidate your loans, or

work your way through a process called loan rehabilitation.

Deferment/Forbearance

Both deferment and forbearance provide temporary relief, letting you suspend your payments for a specified period of time. They are not the same and if you decide to go this route you will prefer deferment if you qualify.



Student Loans Continued

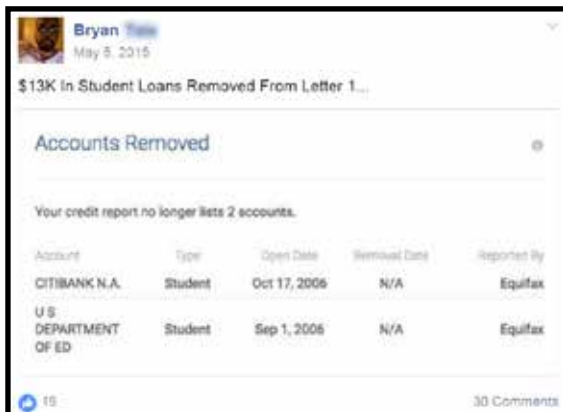
Deferment

With deferment, as with forbearance, interest will continue to accrue during the time frame that you suspend your payments.

However, if you defer a federally subsidized student loan (a Federal Perkins Loan, a Direct Subsidized Loan, or a Subsidized Federal Stafford Loan), then the government pays the interest during this time period and it is not added back to the principal later on. This is why you want deferment for these types of loans.

Forbearance

If you don't qualify for a deferment (you're not enrolled at an accredited school or unemployed) you still might be able to suspend your payments for a period of time by applying to your lender for forbearance.



The screenshot shows a credit report for a user named Bryan, dated May 5, 2015. It highlights that \$13K in student loans have been removed from the report. A section titled 'Accounts Removed' states: 'Your credit report no longer lists 2 accounts.' Below this is a table with the following data:

Account	Type	Open Date	Removed Date	Reported By
CITIBANK N.A.	Student	Oct 17, 2006	N/A	Equifax
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ED	Student	Sep 1, 2006	N/A	Equifax

At the bottom of the screenshot, there are 15 likes and 30 comments.

Under some circumstances, your lender will be required to grant forbearance:

- You're in a medical or dental school residency program,
- Monthly student loan payments total more than 20% of your gross monthly income,
- You are involved in national or community service,
- You're teaching in a qualifying education program

- You're in the National Guard and you've been called up.

If you don't meet one or more of these conditions, you still might be able to get a forbearance; but your lender will have some discretion to say no, or to agree to suspend only a part of your monthly payment.



Pro Tip: Do You Qualify for Loan Forgiveness?

There are certain situations where you can have your federal student loan forgiven, canceled, or discharged. Find out whether you qualify due to your job, disability, the closure of your school, or other circumstances.

Visit: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/repay-loans/forgiveness-cancellation>

The main thing to remember about forbearance is that unlike deferment, you are responsible for interest during the payment suspension period. This interest can either be paid during forbearance, or it gets added onto the principal, not only increasing your balance, but also the length of time it will take to pay off your loans.

If you want to learn more about both of these situations, visit this link:

<http://studentaid.ed.gov/repay-loans/deferment-forbearance>.

Consolidation

This is a great option if you have more than one student loan, and the combined total of all your monthly payments is more than you can handle.

Advantages to consolidating

1. You'll have a single monthly payment that is lower than the total of the payments you're making now.
2. You might be able to extend the repayment period, resulting in a lower monthly payment.
3. You might be able to lock down a single, fixed rate if you are not in one already.



4. Flexible repayment plans are available.
5. Most types of student loan are eligible, both subsidized and unsubsidized.

In certain situations, you can have your federal student loan forgiven, canceled, or discharged. Visit this link to learn more: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/repay-loans/forgiveness-cancellation>

If your school closes while you're enrolled or soon after you withdraw, you may be eligible for discharge of your federal student loan. Visit this link to learn more: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/repay-loans/forgiveness-cancellation/closed-school>

NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Vehicle Repossession

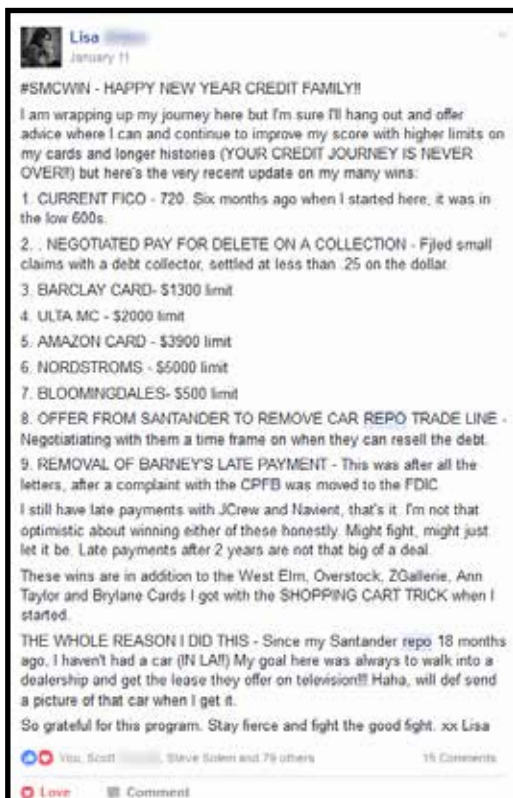
Loans signed at a dealership are considered direct loans. These are typically direct lending loans in which you got pre-approved from a bank, a finance company, or credit union.

Once you enter into a contract with a dealership to buy a vehicle, you use the loan from the direct lender to pay for the vehicle. If this is your type of loan, you can jump ahead to the Repossession dispute process.

Dealership financing is considered a credit sale, which means the dealership is the lender, and the 'lender' that appears on your documentation isn't actually a lender. Instead, it's an outside company that purchased a contract or debt from the dealer.

In this scenario, the dealership submits your credit application to one or more potential assignees, such as a bank, a finance company or credit union, to determine their willingness to buy your contract from the dealer. Each potential assignee decides whether it is willing to buy the contract and then notifies the dealership of its decision.

This minor detail is one that bureaus inaccurately report on all the time. If your credit report shows the account



type as a loan as opposed to credit-sales, it may be low hanging fruit for you to dispute.

In this instance, you could dispute your repo with Part 2 Letter 1 and then follow up with the Repossession Letters in the book.

Vehicle Repossession Dispute Process

Make sure you have copies of all the documents related to your vehicle's purchase, as well as any repossession notices.

This includes (but is not limited to):

- The original retail installment sales contract;
- All documents provided by the dealer and lender;
- All correspondence from the dealer and lender, including envelopes;
- All documents relating to car repairs;
- All inspection documents; and
- All payments on the car loan.

You may need these documents in the case of any legal claims you could potentially establish against the car dealer and the lender, or to defend yourself against their possible lawsuits.

Please remember: a lender does not have to warn you before taking your car. If they do this, without going to court, it's called *self-help* repossession.

Note: The only exception is for cars owned by active duty service members. Active duty service members who have made at least one payment on a car loan cannot be subject to a lender's self-help repossession.

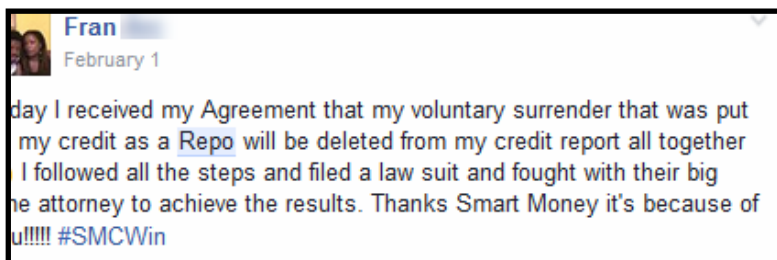
When the lender repossesses your car, it must do so without breaching the peace. When courts review a repossession to determine if a breach of peace occurred, they will look at whether the owner was present, whether the repo company entered the home or garage without the permission of the owner, and whether the repo company used force or the threat of violence to repossess the car. It is generally illegal if the lender repossessed the car while it was parked in a locked garage. If the court decides that the lender breached the peace, the lender and/or the repossession company will be liable for damages caused by the wrongful repossession.

What does the lender have to do after the car is repossessed?

After repossession, the lender must provide two written notices.

First Notice: Redemption

This notice must be provided to the owner of the car and all co-buyers or co-signers. It states that the lender has the car in its possession and that the car will be sold to recover the amount owed. This Notice of Sale





may be the first written notice from your creditor after they repossess the vehicle, if you waived your right to notice of acceleration or if your state does not have a “right to cure” law. If you do not take action to recover your vehicle back before it is sold, then you will not be able to get it back.

The lender must send you this notice at least 10 days before the proposed sale of the car. The timing may be different in some states. This gives you a reasonable amount of time to get your car back. This usually means paying off the loan in full plus the lender’s repossession costs.

The notice will contain information as to where you can get the exact payoff number it will take to get your vehicle back. The notice must be accurate about everything to do with your vehicle and the loan, and in most jurisdictions, it is required to state whether the sale will be open to the public or private, and where it will be.

If a creditor fails to send the you proper notice of the sale, then it is possible that a court will bar the debtor from collecting on a deficiency judgement, even if you know about the sale from an outside source. In some cases, the courts could force the creditor to pay you penalties because of an inadequate selling price.

Your right to redeem, or get your car back, lasts until the car is resold. The letter will also state where and when the car will be sold, and if it is open to the public or is a private sale. If you want, you could attend the auction and bid on your own car. In some instances, re-purchasing the vehicle this way could be cheaper. Also, even though you still owe the lender money, which they can pursue via other legal means, they cannot threaten repossession any more.

Did you know?

Sometimes, filing for bankruptcy can prevent repossession? While the bankruptcy is pending, you can even pay off the car in full or catch up with any past-due payments.

Second Notice: Deficiency

After your car is sold, the lender is then required to send out a second notice, stating the amount that the lender credited you from the resale, as well as a cancellation notice of the original sales contract. The majority of the time, cars are sold at wholesale auctions, at a much lower price than fair market value. If you feel a lender did this when reselling your vehicle, you might be able to use that to defend the “deficiency action” that they will file against you to recoup the difference in the sales price of the vehicle, and what you owe the lender.

For example, in New Jersey, your claim against the lender will be that The Uniform Commercial Code, N.J.S.A. 12A: 9-610(b), whereas the lender is not entitled to all of the money it seeks because the sale was not *commercially reasonable* and, as a result, the sale price was unreasonably low. If your claim is successful, the court will award damages, under N.J.S.A. 12A:9-625, which will reduce or eliminate the amount you owe.

Each state is different and you will need to research the exact code to use.

Another way to reduce the amount due is to challenge the accuracy of this second notice because it may state that you owe more than you are supposed to. If you had any kind of gap insurance, or a service contract factored into the original purchase, those amounts should have been

deducted from the amount that the lender states you owe.

Filing For Bankruptcy Can Prevent Repossession

In general, if you file for bankruptcy, and if you qualify for an automatic stay, then creditors have to stop all collection efforts. This also means that the lender cannot repossess your car unless the bankruptcy court permits it. While the bankruptcy is pending, you can even pay off the car in full or catch up with any past-due payments.

Car Dealer and Lender Must Follow Certain Laws

These laws include:

- Uniform Commercial Code
- Retail Installment Sales Act
- Truth in Lending Act
- Consumer Fraud Act

If these laws are not followed, you may have legal claims and defenses against the lender. Also, you may have claims against the dealer and the repo company.

But let's assume the reason you're here is to get a repo off of your credit report, instead of learning the vast laws about repo's. In that case, here are some letters that could help you.

Repo Letter 1

Send to Collection Agency, Original Creditor, and Car Dealership.

Your Name

Your Address

Collection Agency Name & Address

Original Creditor Name & Address

Car Dealer Name & Address

Date

RE: VIN # [insert vin # here]

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is a formal statement notifying the above parties that the accounts under VIN # [insert VIN # here] are disputed.

The vehicle in question was purchased on or about [insert date], financed by [insert company], repossessed in the state of [insert state], and sold by [insert insert company/creditor] on or about [insert date].

Under the laws of [insert state] and UCC § 9.506 as well as State RISA and MVISA statutes, a deficiency can not be claimed unless all of the required notices were properly and timely given, and all of the allowable redemption and cure time limits were adhered to.

I demand proof that the repossession of the subject vehicle was legal in accordance with the following UCC:

- § 9-506. EFFECT OF ERRORS OR OMISSIONS.
- § 9-611. NOTIFICATION BEFORE DISPOSITION OF COLLATERAL
- § 9-612. TIMELINESS OF NOTIFICATION BEFORE DISPOSITION OF COLLATERAL.
- § 9-613. CONTENTS AND FORM OF NOTIFICATION BEFORE DISPOSITION OF COLLATERAL

You are required to provide me with copies of the legal notices and proof of the commercially reasonable manner of the notification and resale of the subject vehicle.

If no such proof is provided within 15 days from receipt of this certified mail notice, the alleged claim of a deficiency will be considered null and void, and any continued collection activities, or continued reporting of this invalid claim on my credit reports will be considered a violation of the FDCPA and FCRA.

In addition, if you singularly or severally fail to comply with the above

(Letter continued on next page)

Chapter 6: Student Loans, Repossessions, and HIPAA

(Repo Letter 1 continued)

requests, I reserve the right to seek damages against all parties, under all available State and Federal statutes and including but not limited to UCC § 9-625 remedies.

Furthermore, you are hereby notified that at no point in time and under no circumstances is your company; an employee of your company; a representative for your company or affiliates are to contact me or any family members by any means other than the US mail system.

Your Name (printed or typed, not signed)

Cc: Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
Cc: Attorney General's Office
Cc: Better Business Bureau



Repo Letter 2

Send to Credit Bureaus after 15 days of sending Repo Letter 1.

Your Name

Your Address

Credit Bureau Name

Credit Bureau Address

Date

RE: Last 4 of SSN 0000

This letter is in reference to the account listed on my credit report by [insert company name] under account # [insert acct #]. This account is being illegally reported on my credit report. I formally disputed it directly with [insert company name] in regards to their illegal reporting, and have not received any satisfactory reply.

Therefore, I am now formally disputing directly with you. Furthermore, if at any time during your investigation the above account is verified by [insert company name] I am requesting your method of verification pursuant to the FCRA, including the name of the person with whom you spoke, who has firsthand knowledge of the account in question.

I am maintaining a careful record of my communications with you for the purpose of filing a complaint with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the Attorney General's office, should you continue reporting this erroneous item.

Your Name (printed or typed, not signed)

P.S. Please be aware that dependent upon your response, I may be detailing any potential issues with your company via an online public press release.

Cc: Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

Cc: Attorney General's Office

Cc: Better Business Bureau



HIPAA & Medical Collections

Remember when we previously spoke about the National Consumer Assistance Plan (NCAP) wherein the major consumer credit bureaus and 31 state attorneys general agreed to the removal of tax liens and civil judgments from consumers' credit reports? Well, those discussions also resulted in an agreement that prohibits adding medical debt to credit reports until after 180 days from the time the account becomes delinquent and is sent to the credit reporting agencies. It also mandates medical collections that have been paid, or that are being paid by insurance, be removed from reporting on your credit reports. The six-month period is intended to ensure there's enough time to resolve disputes with insurers and delays in payment.

However, if you happen to have a collection agency harassing you about a medical bill, you can send them Part 1, Letter 1 from Chapter 2 of this book, and in return they may send you a copy of a medical bill that they claim is yours.

Typically the following also happens:

- a) They show no proof that they have an agreement with the original creditor to collect this alleged debt
- b) They have no copy of a signed contract where you allegedly agreed to pay the charges
- c) The medical bill reveals personal medical information about you

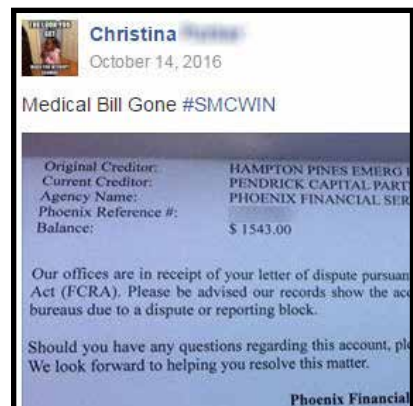
While A or B is usually enough to give you the leverage you need to make them go away, C is the big one because it may put them in violation of HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996). Privacy rules prohibit disclosing an individual's protected health information unless you specifically authorized them to.

So if the doctor or hospital shared anything on the bill that alludes to your condition or what you may have been treated for, they may have just broken privacy rules.

This gives you LEVERAGE.

And that leverage makes you a problem for both the collection agency and the hospital/doctor. Usually it is a problem that they will all want to go away quickly, so that they can go after others who are not aware of these laws.

Here are some letters that could help with medical collections.



Letter To Original Health Care Provider

Your Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Last 4 of SSN

HIPAA Compliance Office

Health care provider creditor

Address

Date

Dear Sir/Madam;

This letter is in reference to [account #] for services provided to [name of patient] on [date of service].

In regard to the bill on this account in the amount of \$ _____ :

Please be advised that under Federal Statutes, The Fair Credit Reporting Act, (15 U.S.C. § 1681 et seq) and [name of your State]'s Consumer Credit Statutes, and subtitle D of the ARRA ,SEC. 13401. APPLICATION OF SECURITY PROVISIONS AND PENALTIES TO BUSINESS ASSOCIATES OF COVERED ENTITIES; and SEC. 13407(1) BREACH OF SECURITY.

The term “breach of security” means, with respect to unsecured PHR identifiable health information of an individual in a personal health record, acquisition of such information without the authorization of the individual. You may be held liable for the actions of [collection agency name].

Please note that the these liabilities are under the penalty rules of the Omnibus Final Rule effective 09/23/2013 interpreting and implementing various provisions of the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act of 2009 (HITECH Act) as issued 11/30/2009

- (a) *Duty of furnishers of information to provide accurate information.*
- (I) *Prohibition.*
- (A) *Reporting information with actual knowledge of errors.*

HIPAA and [name of your State]'s Medical Privacy Statutes and the penalty provisions of the ARRA section D, privacy provisions ,the penalty rules of the HITECH Act as issued 11/30/2009 and the Omnibus Final Rule effective 09/23/2013 and the FACT Act final rules effective July 1, 2010 are in effect in this situation.

The Privacy Rules prohibits a covered entity from using or disclosing an individual's protected health information (“PHI”) unless specifically

(Letter continued on next page)

Chapter 6: Student Loans, Repossessions, and HIPAA

(Letter to original healthcare provider continued)

authorized by the individual or otherwise allowed under the Privacy Rules.

In general, PHI encompasses substantially all “individually identifiable health information” that is transmitted or maintained in any medium. “Individually identifiable health information” includes health information that is created or received by a health care provider, health plan, employer, or health care clearinghouse, and that relates to an individual’s physical or mental health or condition, including information related to an individual’s care or the PAYMENT for such care.

Your furnishing of my account information to [collection agency name], is not in compliance with HIPAA, or [name of your State]’s Privacy Act, and any subsequent reporting of this account on my credit reports to [credit reporting bureaus] is a clear violation of Public Law 104-191 (“HIPAA”).

I am requesting you promptly rescind all such account information furnished to [collection agency] and require them to purge their records of all reference to this account, and that you insure that any and all reporting of this account is immediately deleted from my credit reports.

(insert the underlined phrase for hospitals)

You are also advised that you may be in violation of the Notice of Proposed Procedures for Charitable Hospitals to Correct and Disclose Failures to Meet Section 501(r) of the Affordable Care Act.

Please respond, in writing within 10 days acknowledging that you are processing this request.

I am reserving the right, to take appropriate legal and civil action including reporting to any applicable regulatory authorities any lack of cooperation or compliance with this request.

I hereby waive my rights under HIPAA and any State Privacy Act for the single purpose of your transmission of this request and accompanying documentation in any required report you must make to your E & O insurance carrier.

Sincerely,

Name (printed not signed)

HIPAA Collection Agency Validation, Dispute, Cease & Desist

This letter is to notify the agency that the debt is beyond SOL, or is invalid for other reasons, and subject to the HIPAA privacy laws.

Your Name

Your Address

Collection Agency Name

Collection Agency Address

Date

Re: Acct # XXXX-XXXX-XXXX-XXXX

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is being sent to you in response to your recent letter.

This is not a refusal to pay, but a notice that your claim is disputed.

Under the Fair Debt Collections Practices Act (FDCPA), I have the right to request validation of the debt you say I owe you. I am requesting proof that I am indeed the party you are asking to pay this debt, the date of the alleged medical service, the name of the patient, and proof that there is some contractual obligation which is binding on me to pay this debt.

Please attach copies of:

Any agreement with your client that grants you the authority to collect on this alleged debt, or proof of acquisition by purchase or assignment, and authorization under subtitle D of the ARRA, SEC. 13401. APPLICATION OF SECURITY PROVISIONS AND PENALTIES TO BUSINESS ASSOCIATES OF COVERED ENTITIES; and SEC. 13407(1) BREACH OF SECURITY.

The term “breach of security” means, with respect to unsecured PHR identifiable health information of an individual in a personal health record, acquisition of such information without the authorization of the individual.

Please note that enforcement of penalties against you is covered under the penalty rules of the Omnibus Final Rule effective 09/23/2013 interpreting and implementing various provisions of the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act of 2009 (HITECH Act) as issued 11/30/2009 and the penalty rules of the FCRA and FACTA including FACT Act changes final rules effective July 1, 2010.

(Letter continued on next page)

Chapter 6: Student Loans, Repossessions, and HIPAA

(Validation, Dispute, Cease & Desist Letter continued)

Please also attach copies of any agreement that bears the signature of the alleged debtor wherein he or she agreed to pay the creditor and as this is a medical account a copy of any HIPAA authorization.

Please also be advised that this letter is not only a formal dispute, but a request that you cease and desist any and all collection activities, including reporting of; or verifying of this account on my credit reports.

I require compliance with the terms and conditions of this letter within 30 days. or a complete withdrawal, in writing, of any claim.

In the event of noncompliance, I reserve the right to file charges and/or complaints with the OCR on your HIPAA violations and appropriate County, State & Federal authorities, the CFPB, BBB and State Bar associations for violations of the FDCPA, FCRA, and Federal and State statutes on illegal collection activities on any account that may be time-barred as well as in violation of [name of your State] medical privacy rules.

I also hereby reserve my right to take private civil action against you to recover damages.

Sincerely,

Name (printed not signed)



Good Credit Lines Quickly

Method 1: Alternative Credit Cards and Credit Lines

Would you like to get over \$10,000 in guaranteed credit added to your credit report? Adding all the SMM's at the start of your credit repair, even if it results in a hard pull, will allow these accounts to age your credit while you work on your reports, and the inquiries (if any) will slowly lose their impact as they age as well. This is a double benefit for you!

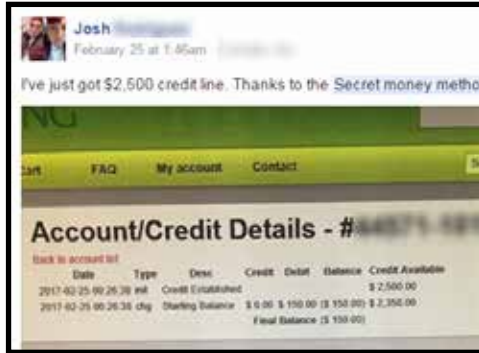
If you'd like to add the guaranteed lines of credit, you can do so right here: <http://creditsecret.org/secret-money-method>

What's the benefit of getting more credit if your score is in the dumps?

As we explained earlier in this book, 30% of your score is determined by amounts owed, and 10% is determined by new credit.

So let's say you currently have a \$5,000 credit card limit and you owe \$4,500 on it. That would mean you are at 90% usage. This dramatically hurts your FICO score.

By adding \$10,000 in new credit, you would now only owe \$4,500 on \$15,000 available credit, bringing your utilization down from 90% to only 30%. In this case your FICO score would skyrocket. Additionally, since the \$10,000 is "new credit" your score would again improve.



The goal of getting \$10,000 in new credit is not to go and spend it - its main purpose is to show the credit bureaus that you are responsible and you aren't maxed out.

Please Note!

You cannot be in an open Bankruptcy case and obtain these lines of credit.

Method 2: Rent Payments

Wouldn't it be nice to have your rent payments added as positive tradelines to your credit reports? Now you can. Go to RentReporters <http://www.rentreporters.com> and use promo code: BA539 for \$10 off

RentReporters reports your on-time rent payments to the credit bureau which will help increase your score.

Method 3: Piggybacking

A friend of mine named Tyler moved to the U.S. from Canada and had no

credit. He asked his friend with great credit to add him onto his Platinum Amex account as an “authorized user”. Tyler never even used the card and 6 months later his credit was 720.

This is because he is taking advantage of his friend's great credit history. Tyler's friend vouched for him and the credit bureaus love that when it comes from a reputable person.

A lot of 18-22 year olds do the same thing, piggybacking on their parent's accounts. Spouses also help each other out this way if one has better credit than the other.

By doing this, the authorized user receives a spillover of benefits of the main account holder's good credit, without ever actually needing to use the card.



The Shopping Cart Trick

Here is a little-known trick that allows people with bad credit to obtain a credit card. And in doing so, you increase your overall available credit on your credit report, and your score jumps as a result.

You see, this shopping cart trick relies on the fact that some websites pre-approve you when you add items to your online shopping cart, without actually checking your score. This shopping cart trick is what is known as a “soft pull” on your credit report.

If you are a member of our VIP Facebook group, the Smart Money Club, you can do a search using the term “shopping cart trick,” and you’ll see countless posts of people who have gotten it to work for them!

There are a couple of rules we need to follow:

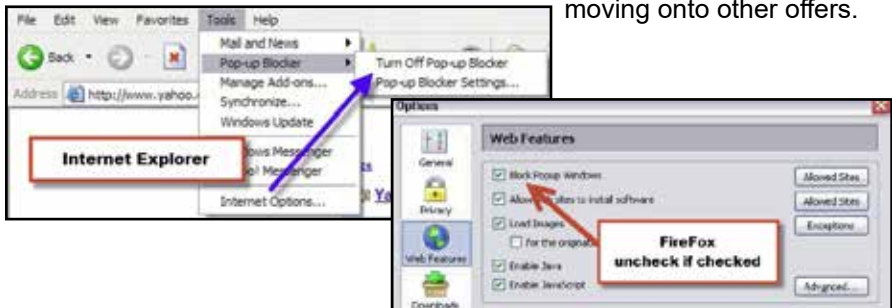
1. Make sure your pop-up blocker is turned off on your web browser. This could be important depending on the website. You just want to ensure you won’t miss the offer. Plus, when you are done, you can turn it back on.



2. Only use the last part of your social security number. If they ask for all of the numbers in your SSN, do not complete the form. Try again later or on another website.

Shopping Cart Trick Credit Opportunities

This list will provide you with several options that have been tested with the Shopping Cart List. Instead of hitting them all at one time, select two or three and focus on those before moving onto other offers.



Chapter 7: Advanced Credit Techniques

Here is a list of the most popular cards.

Abercrombie & Fitch Credit Card
<https://abercrombie.com/shop/us>

Ann Taylor Credit Card
<http://www.annataylor.com>

Bath & Body Works
<http://bathandbodyworks.com>

Brylane Home Credit Card
<http://www.brylanehome.com>

Buckle Credit Card
<http://www.buckle.com>

Coldwater Creek
<http://www.coldwatercreek.com>

Express Credit Card
<http://www.express.com>

GameStop
<http://www.gamestop.com>

Home Shopping Network (HSN)
(You need to go to the every end of the check out process before it'll appear)
<http://www.hsn.com>

J.Crew
<http://www.jcrew.com>

J. Jill Credit Card
<http://www.jjill.com>

Jessica London
<http://jessicalondon.com>

King Size Direct
<http://kingsizedirect.com>

LOFT Credit Card
<http://www.loft.com>

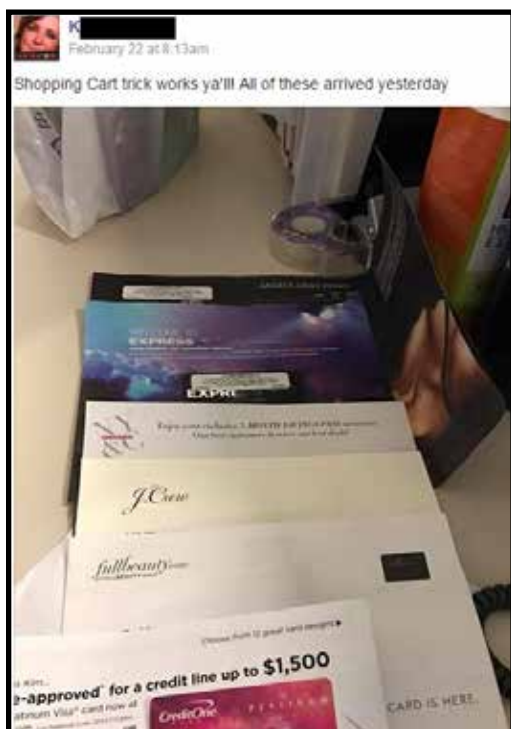
New York & Co. Rewards Credit Card
<http://nyandcompany.com>

One Stop Plus
<http://www.onestopplus.com>

Overstock.com (While it does ask for your full SSN, it should still be a soft pull. This card usually gives a nice high limit and automatic credit limit increases are regular.)
<http://www.overstock.com>

Roamans
<http://www.roamans.com>

The Sportsman's Guide Visa
<http://sportsmansguide.com>



Total Rewards (There is reports of this one resulting in a hard pull, even when it only asks for the last four digitals)
<https://www.totalrewards.com>

Victoria's Secret Credit Card
(There is reports of this one resulting in a hard pull, even when it only asks for the last four digitals)
<https://www.victoriasecret.com>

Wayfair
<http://www.wayfair.com>

Williams-Sonoma
<https://www.williams-sonoma.com>

Woman Within Credit Card
<http://www.womanwithin.com>



Here is your step-by-step process to do the Shopping Cart Trick:

1) Make sure your browser history, cookies and cache has all been cleared out. You will have to go into your browser settings to do this. This step is essential because the browser (and website) will have your information before you can give it to them.

2) Create a new account at the website you want to try to obtain a credit card. Usually, there is a place to create a free account or join their loyalty program in the top right area of the page. Enter everything about yourself as it appears on your credit report. Typically, Comenity Bank provides all of the above cards, and they use Experian. Just make sure your info matches up with theirs. You also want to subscribe to the store emails because sometimes they send pre-approvals to your email.

3) Go on a browsing spree and place a few items in your shopping cart. It seems to work best when you have a few products that total up to around \$100. If it doesn't work right away, you can change it up or down by \$50, as that seems to be the best option.

4) Start to check out. Navigate to your cart like you are going to purchase the items you added. Place all of the billing information it's asking for in the online form but type slowly. You don't want to use the autofill feature that your browser may provide.

5) Patience is to your advantage. If it's working correctly, a pop-up window will show up with a credit card offer. You will know it worked if it asks for the last four digits of your social security number.

6) Repeat the process. You can do this with as many cards as you wish. If it doesn't work right away, keep a lookout in your emails. You may also receive offers in your inbox over the next few days.

You do not have to purchase anything for this trick to work. Just know that



after you fill out your application, it will probably take you back to the checkout page. Once you are finished with the application, you can just abandon your shopping cart by closing the whole page down.

Initially, your credit cards may have very low credit limits of \$500 or less. However some members have received as much as \$2,500 per card.

This trick is useful to you if you currently have bad credit and need a way to add positive credit lines to your credit report without the hard pull (hard inquiry).

Utilizing Credit Unions

One of the best credit unions to join is the Navy Federal Credit Union if you meet their membership criteria. They have fantastic rates on loans and credit cards, and free checking and savings accounts.

They've also been known to give high limit unsecured credit cards to people with bad credit.

Navy Federal primarily serves members with military affiliations - meaning someone in your immediate family has to have served in the military.



The BEST part about being a member of Navy Federal is that they give out HUGE credit limits to members, even with terrible credit. We recommend applying for their Visa Signature Rewards card in order to get the highest limit. We've even seen people with credit scores in the low 500's be approved for as much as \$25,000.

Navy Federal is also great about loans as well. Some member have obtained a low-interest loan from them, and then used that to pay off other high interest debt.

But what if you don't have any relatives in the military? Skip to PenFed.org which we go over next. They are also an excellent credit union.



Pentagon Federal

Anyone can join Pentagon Federal Credit Union. If you are not affiliated with the military, they ask you to donate a minimal amount to one of their charities or affiliations. As their website states: "Go to PenFed.org and choose Join PenFed. In three steps, you'll become a PenFed member."

First they'll ask for your eligibility. Just follow the prompts on the application and choose which organization to "join" and fulfill their requirements.

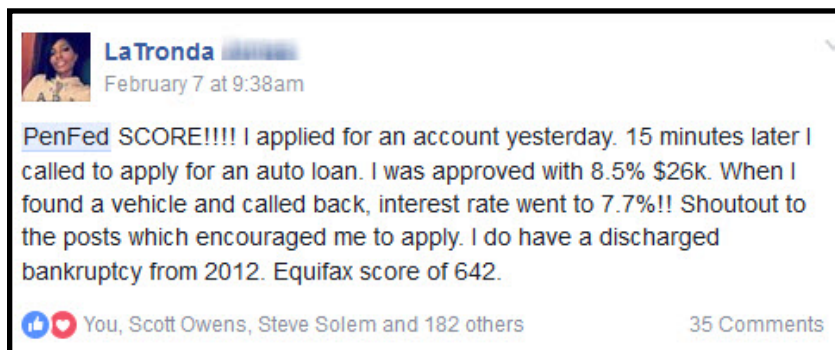
Then finish filling out all your personal information.

Then they will ask you to fund your account. When you open a credit union account you fund your "ownership" in that credit union. The minimum deposit for a PenFed Share Account is \$5. Your membership fees to whichever organization you chose



in step one will also be added to the total. Remember: once you are a member of PenFed, you do not have to continue your membership in the qualifying organization you chose. Once a member, always a member.

Double check all your information and submit the application. You'll get confirmation right away. They will email you further instructions for logging into your account where you can see what they offer as far as



loans and credit cards.

Points to Consider

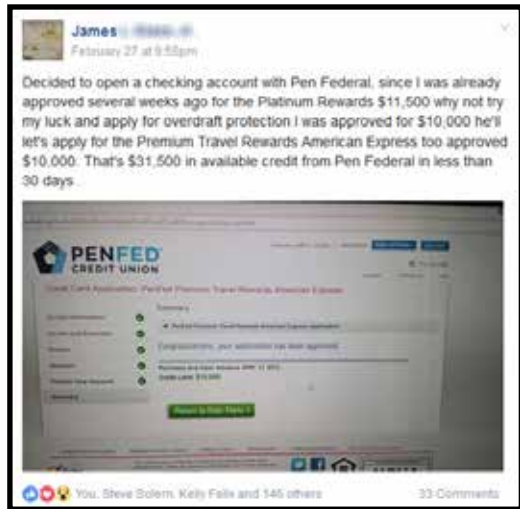
When you open an account with PenFed, your Equifax credit report is pulled.

PenFed utilizes the same pull for 90 days for lending decisions. You can apply for all types of credit they offer within 90 days without a second inquiry performed.

Always apply by phone for products! Why? A few reasons. First, when you apply for a product online, there is an automated credit screening that is programmed to look for certain things on your CR (i.e. charge-offs, collections, high utilization rates, etc.). The automated system “reads” your CR and either spits out a denial or approval; if a denial, you’ll get generic reasons, like the ones mentioned earlier - charge-offs, collection, too many

revolving accounts.

Also when you apply by phone, although the customer service rep you speak with is using the same system that would be used if you applied online, if you are denied, you can ask to be connected to a loan officer (LO) and explain your situation. Many times, the LO can push through (i.e. override) an application that was previously denied, and/or inform you what you do qualify for, and what you need to have removed from your credit report in order to qualify for the product you were looking for originally.



**Yolanda**
30 mins

One month ago yesterday, I posted here for advise on how to get a car because mine died....I was in tears and didn't know what to do next....But I thank God for this group!!!! I got some sound advice, keep on sending out my letters and praying for a miracle...In one month, I was approved for another credit card and an auto loan!!!! I brought this home yesterday!!!!



 Love  Comment

 You and 27 others

#SMCWIN !!

**Wilfred**
February 1

#smcwin I got my BK deleted from equifax. I called penfed today for a personal loan to use it to travel. I got approved for \$35,000!!! Thank you!!!

 Scott Owens, Steve Solem and 120 others

**Brian Barú Murray**
February 24 at 5:34pm

#smcwin Just got my wife approved for a Navy Federal Card for 14.8k

 Steve Solem, Dominique Davis and 58 others

14 Comments

**Denise**
February 6 at 9:18am

I know everyone raves about penfed (and kudos to those whom they've helped) but I have to applaud navy federal yet again. This time it's my husband's #smcwin

He has no collections. His repo is still on his credit report but it's showing paid in full. His credit usage is at 6%. His equifax score is 589. (He only has 3 trade lines reporting. Waiting for his auto loan to report.) Experian 659. Transunion 633

Cash rewards visa \$7500! Checking line of credit \$2000!

 You, Scott Owens, Steve Solem and 59 others

11 Comments

Business Credit

If you run a business, or you want to run a business, then you will likely want to build a business profile. A lot of people fund their business dreams with their own personal credit history, but there is no reason to risk your personal credit history. Building business credit is as simple as following the steps below:

- Incorporate your business using a site like <http://LegalZoom.com> is a good option
- Obtain a federal tax identification number (EIN)
- Apply for a D-U-N-S® at <http://creditsecret.org/dnb>
- Open a business bank account
- Have a business phone number
- Ask For Trade References or tradelines
- Obtain business credit card(s)
- Establish a line of credit with vendors or suppliers
- Monitor Your Scores & Ratings

There are many ways to incorporate your business, and we won't get into which entity is best. You can visit <http://LegalZoom.com> and take care of the paperwork right online.

You'll apply for a federal EIN at the same time you incorporate.

Once you've done that, you'll want to apply for a D-U-N-S® number at <http://creditsecret.org/dnb>. D&B are a business credit agency, but they don't actually grant credit to businesses. What they do is provide

businesses with the data to decide whether or not to extend a line of credit to another business.

A DUNS number is a nine-digit number that is unique to your company. This DUNS number will be used to create your business credit file, similar to how your social security number is used to identify your personal credit reports.

You'll need a bank account in the business name, as well as a phone number, and maybe a fax number. It's a good idea to have all these separate from any personal accounts.

Business Credit Lines

Kabbage

<http://creditsecret.org/kabbage>

- Sign up in minutes and get a decision instantly.
- No cost or obligation to draw funds.
- Take only what you need, when you need it.
- Pay only for only what you take.
- Access your cash 24/7.

Grow your business.

Another quality site for business credit info is **Creditsuite** <http://creditsecret.org/creditsuite>

Go there to get a free report on *"How to build credit for your EIN that's not linked to your SSN"*.

Credit Card for No Credit or Low Credit Scores

Secured Cards

Secured cards are great for boosting your score and building positive payment history, as well as for increasing your credit limit to debt ratio. Basically you determine your account limit by how much you deposit. After several months of payment history, more opportunities can open up for unsecured credit lines.

First Progress Platinum Prestige MasterCard® Secured Credit Card <http://creditsecret.org/prestige>

- No Credit History or Minimum Credit Score Required for Approval.
- Monthly Reporting to all 3 Major Credit Bureaus to Establish Credit History.
- Credit Line Secured by Your Fully-Refundable Deposit of \$200 -- \$2,000 Submitted with Application.
- Nationwide Program though not yet available in NY, IA, AR, or WI
*See Card Terms.

Milestone Gold Mastercard® <http://creditsecret.org/milestone>

- Our application is quick and easy with instant pre-qualification available.
- All credit histories considered.
- Access your account online or from your mobile device 24/7.

- Choice of card image at no extra charge.
- Account history is reported to the three major credit bureaus in the U.S.

SelfLender.com <http://creditsecret.org/selflender>

Self Lender also offers credit products to people with bad credit or no credit by offering Credit Builder Accounts. Credit Builder accounts help people who need to build their credit through installment loans.

A Credit Builder Account is like a reverse loan. You pay the payments first, and you get the money afterwards. The account is structured as a loan, and you build credit as you make payments towards your account. All of your loan payments are reported to all three credit bureaus.

Group One Platinum <http://creditsecret.org/freedom>

- \$500 Limit
- Easy Terms*
- No Credit Check
- No Employment Check
- Reports to Major Bureau
- Fast Online Application

Unsecured Cards

Indigo® Mastercard® with
Fast Pre-qualification

<http://creditsecret.org/indigo>

- Our pre-qualification process does not affect your credit score
- Keeping your account in good standing may help establish and/or improve your credit
- 24/7 access to your account, even on mobile!
- Protection from fraud, if your card happens to be lost or stolen
- Account history is reported to the three major credit bureaus in the U.S..

Shopping Cards

Shopping cards allow you to get unsecured credit lines for use with online shopping at specific websites. As it relates to your credit score, it is less important to consider what type of shopping is offered, and more important to consider that you will get a credit score boost.

Fingerhut Credit Account

<http://creditsecret.org/fingerhut>

- Easy application! Get a credit decision in seconds.
- Build your credit history – Fingerhut reports to all 3 major credit bureaus.
- Use your line of credit to shop thousands of items from great brands like Samsung, KitchenAid, and DeWalt.
- Not an access card.

Soar Platinum

<http://creditsecret.org/soar>

- No Credit Check
- \$1,000 unsecured
- No Application Denied for Bad Credit!
- Up to \$1,000 Credit Line

Comes with 2 Bonus Offers:

1. Prepaid Visa Card

- No Credit Check
- Free Online Bill Pay
- No Overdraft Fees

2. \$500 Installment Loan

- 2 Minute Approval Process
- Get Cash within 24 hours
- Poor Credit OK

Personal Loans

Opp Loans

<http://creditsecret.org/opploans>

- Get approved quickly and receive money in your account as soon as the next business day.
- Lower Interest.
- Highly rated.
- Reports to credit bureaus.

Student Loan Refinancing

LendKey

<http://creditsecret.org/lendkey>

Lower Your Payments. You can reduce your interest rate, lower your monthly payments, and save thousands over the lifetime of your student loans.

Simplify Your Finances. You'll be able to refinance your federal and private student loans, including graduate loans, into one convenient loan at a great rate.

Flexible Repayment Options. Get personalized quotes with various repayment terms, including interest-only payments for the first four years.

No Hidden Fees. Refinancing student loans through LendKey means no origination fees or penalties for making extra or early payments!



#SMCWIN !!



What To Do After Your Credit is Fixed

Little Known Tips And Best Practices

Credit Line Increases

Once you are approved for a credit card or credit line, regularly ask for a limit increase at least 3 times per year. Credit limit increases are good, and they lower your overall percentage owed on your entire credit profile.

Business Credit Cards

Get a business credit card. If you do not own a business, you can easily create one at LegalZoom.com for less than \$200. If you do anything of value outside of your normal 9 to 5 job, even if you sell baked goods and only make a few hundred dollars a year, incorporate a small business, at

least on paper. It will open up many more credit opportunities.

Charge Cards

Charge cards are better for your credit than regular credit cards. Charge cards are those like American Express, which require you to pay the full balance off every month.

Hard Inquiries

Inquiries can hurt your score, especially if you apply for several credit cards in a short period of time. However, the same is NOT true with auto loans or home loans. You can apply for as many auto loans or home loans as you want within a 45 day period, and it will all only count as 1 inquiry. (1 for autos and 1 for homes)

Don't Close Accounts

Do not close any credit cards you have paid off. It looks better to have existing, open accounts with a zero balance. However, to prevent those creditors from closing the account because of non-use, be sure to charge something small every other month, then pay it off.

Final Notes and Summary

To always keep up to date with our latest and greatest tips & tricks not included in the book, make sure to visit: <http://creditsecret.org/smart-money-club-members>

You will find all sorts of extra juicy tips, dispute letters, videos and more.



Frequently Asked Questions

Over the course of the past few years we have had thousands and thousands of questions, either in our fantastic Smart Money Club Facebook Group or via email to support@creditsecret.org

The following pages represent the most common questions. There are many bits of gold in the following pages, and we highly recommend you spend some time reading through all this excellent information.

Remember: if you don't find what you are looking for, feel free to ask your own questions in the group or send us a support request at support@creditsecret.org



Getting Started

Question: I'm skeptical. Has anyone really had this work for them?

Answer: In our Facebook group there is a search bar. Just do a search for SMCWin and find thousands of posts by members who have taken control of their credit history.

Question: I just joined. Where do I start?

Answer: When you bought the book, you received a "Welcome Email" with instructions to login to your member dashboard at <http://creditsecret.org/login>. In that dashboard are instructions on how to get started. There is also a video and an audio file of the book in your dashboard. If you cannot locate the welcome email, simply contact support@creditsecret.org

Question: I just joined. How long before I receive the book?

Answer: You get access to the eBook right away in your member dashboard at <http://creditsecret.org/login>. If you ordered a hard copy, it typically takes 3-7 business days. Fulfillment will send you a separate email with tracking information. If you do not get it within this time frame, please send us a note to support@creditsecret.org.

Question: I just joined. Do I have to wait to receive the book before I can start?

Answer: Absolutely not! Sign in to your online dashboard and follow the quickstart instructions!

Question: Should I dispute an old paid collection?

Answer: First of all you probably should not claim that an item isn't yours if you have paid it, because that is false - unless you paid it by mistake. There are other more ethical ways to get it off, by challenging a reporting error. Second, even paid collections can help your score because if they are several years old they can add to your FICO score in a positive way by counting towards your overall credit age. Sometimes, especially if you have a thin credit file, removing an old paid collection can actually lower your score.



Question: How do I raise my scores?

Answer: Follow every step outlined in this book, without skipping or jumping ahead.

Question: My score is X (below 650 with public records and/or collection accounts on your report). Can I start with getting late pays removed?

Answer: Yes, you COULD start there, but it will have less impact on your score. Start first with collection accounts and public records because that will have the most impact on your score.

Question: How do I get late pays removed?

Answer: You can send a goodwill letter from Chapter 2 requesting the removal after you are current for awhile with the account.

Question: What if I've previously used a credit repair firm and one of my items is already marked as "disputed" on my credit report?

Answer: You can call the credit bureau(s) and request that the prior dispute(s) be removed. When people apply for a mortgage, the lenders require that no items on their credit report be under dispute, so it is a very common request to have your prior disputes removed. That way you can start the process in our book fresh.

Question: Can I dispute an open account I'm tired of paying on?

Answer: Sure if you want them to close the account, potentially sue you, AND become a negative listing on your report. This is not a debt eradication system. This system just cleans up your credit report/score. If you want to get rid of a debt you can declare bankruptcy, pay it, or negotiate a debt relief plan with the creditor.

Question: There is only a PO Box on my credit report. I can't mail a certified letter to a PO Box. What do I do now?

Answer: You can send certified mail to the PO Box. It works for a PO Box the same way it does for you.

They will receive a card in the box saying that they have a letter to sign for. It will be delivered.

Question: My letter got returned. Now what?

Answer: If you sent the letter to the address reported on your credit report and it got returned, then that proves that the information being reported is inaccurate. In that case you can send a photocopy of the returned envelope and a dispute to the credit bureau for incomplete/inaccurate reporting. That way they will have proof that the address and account is invalid.

Question: My creditor sent me papers (an itemized bill or an explanation) but no signature. Now what?

Answer: The next step will be sending Part 1, Letter 2.

Question: My creditor marked it disputed, but didn't send me proof of a contract with my signature. Now what?

Answer: You can send Part 1 Letter 2.



Question: My creditor didn't respond at all. Now what?

Answer: You can send Part 1 Letter 3.



Question: My creditor both responded and marked it disputed. Now what?

Answer: You can skip to Part 2 letter 1.

Question: Is there a way to get a judgment, bankruptcy, or other public record removed from my report? If so, how? Who do I send the letter to?

Answer: Yes. First you can try sending Part 2 Letter 1 (P2L1) to the credit bureau. If it comes back verified, then refer to Chapter 3 for a special loophole on getting public records removed.

Question: I was wondering if this can work for student loans?

Answer: Many of our members have been successful with removing student loans from their credit report, that are reporting negatively. For this you would use Part 2 Letter 1 in Chapter 2.

Question: Where do I get the addresses for my creditors?

Answer: Your credit report should list the address of the creditor reporting the line item. If there is no address on your report, you can contact the credit bureau and get it removed for inaccurate or incomplete reporting using the letter from Chapter 2.

Question: A collection agency is calling us and driving us crazy. Is there anything we can do?

Answer: It is generally not a good idea to talk with collection agents on the phone. You can make them stop. Just get the correct mailing address for the agency and write to them using something along these lines:



Pro Tip: Bad Account Numbers?

If your account number is being reported with X's instead of the full number, this could be considered "inaccurate reporting", and that alone should justify removal. See the letter in Chapter 2 for inaccurate/incomplete reporting.



"I require that you communicate with me only in writing, and only at the address provided above. You may not contact me by phone at any time, for any reason." They are required by law (the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act) to honor this written request, and they usually do.

Credit Reports

Question: I'm looking at the credit reports and all my accounts end with 'XXXX' so they are obviously disguising last 4 digits. Do I need to send in my complete account # on my letters? How do I get complete the complete number?

Answer: In your letter, include whatever numbers you do know, and then use X's for the remainder like they do. They will be able to identify you by your social security number and/or name & address. They are the ones that reported the information to begin with, it is their job to find it.

Question: Where should I get my credit report and scores?

Answer: Many members are happy with the resource provided at CreditSecret.org/scores. Others like to use www.MyFico.com or www.CreditCheckTotal.com for their reports. And some use Credit Karma or Credit Sesame.

Question: I have credit monitoring with another service and the scores are way different than what my bank, MyFico.com, or other sources say. Why?

Answer: Please see Chapter 1 for more about why credit scores fluctuate depending on the provider.

Question: My FICO score is XXX and a lender turned me down even though it is higher than what they said I needed to get financed. What's going on?

Answer: There are 19 different versions of a FICO score. Please see Chapter 1 for more about different scoring models.

Question: My credit monitoring website only updates once every X days. What do I do if I need to get the latest copy of my report before that?

Answer: You can purchase a copy of your report or sign up for monitoring with a second free service.

Question: How long will it take on average to take it to go from a 500 score to 750?

Answer: It depends on you doing things in a timely fashion and following the system exactly. Alison Hilton went from 588 to 781 in 3 months. But she went from 588 to 719 in about 45 days.

Question: Should I pay off old charge-offs if I can?

Answer: If you want to get the most bang for your buck, you should negotiate to pay only if the creditors agree to remove the items from your reports. This is called “pay for deletion.” Contact each creditor and say that

you’re willing to pay the debt, but only on the condition that the creditor will notify the CRAs to remove the item. Once you get verbal agreement, follow up with each creditor in writing. Before you pay, make sure you get an authorized representative’s signature on a letter stating that the creditor agrees to the deletion.

Question: Are old closed accounts hurting my score? Should I work on getting them removed?

Answer: If you closed them, paid them off, and the accounts are in good standing, then they are not doing your credit scores any harm. On the contrary, they may help your average age if they are very old. If the



creditor closed the account because of credit or payment issues, then they are derogatory. In that case you could begin the process with Part 1, Letter 1.

Sending Letters

Question: Will these letters get me in trouble? I'm scared of getting sued!

Answer: All we teach is to exercise your rights by demanding that companies prove you actually owe these debts AND that they are being reported fairly and accurately. It has been reported that over 50% of credit reports contain errors or unfair entries. Even if the amount is off 1 dollar, or the date is off one day, your

burden is on THEM to accurately report, not you. These companies are so big and disorganized they literally make MILLIONS of errors or lose/destroy the original paperwork that may or may not have had your signature on it.

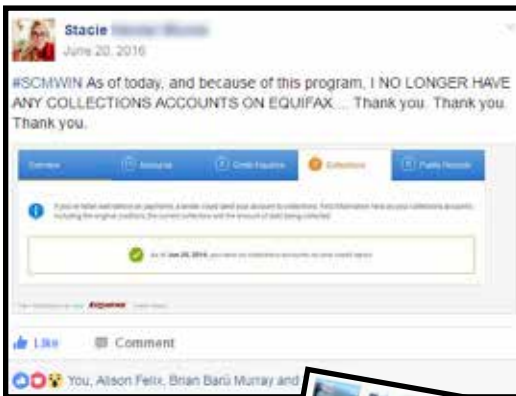
With that said, if you want the advice of an attorney, or if you fear being sued or HAVE been sued for some reason, we recommend: <http://creditsecret.org/legalshield>

Question: Has anyone had any success getting a specific creditor or collection agency to remove things from their report?

Answer: You can use the search bar in the Facebook Group and search for your creditor or collection agencies name. Two of the most popular (or unpopular) are Midland Funding and Portfolio Associates.

Question: Is there a letter to get a hard inquiry off of my report?

Answer: Yes. Please see Chapter 1.



name is misspelled, and address is wrong, etc - all of these are valid reasons for removal. Why not make them prove it to you? The



Question: Do I need to get my old personal information such as addresses or employers removed, or do I send Part 1 Letter 1 first?

Answer: That is up to you. Removing your old information is not necessary, but some members have had success with doing it first. The idea is that some of your accounts may be linked to an old address, and once that address is removed, your dispute has a higher probability of success.

Question: I have several accounts with one creditor. How many disputes can I put in one letter?

Answer: We recommend one dispute, per envelope.

Question: Where is the law that requires a signature for it to be a valid debt?

Answer: The Fair Credit Reporting Act, Fair Credit Billing Act, and the Fair Debt Collections Act require a signature on an original consumer contract for a debt to be valid.



Question: When does my 30 day countdown start?

Answer: The moment the letter is signed for by the recipient.

Question: I received my first response from one of the collection agencies stating that there is no law that obligates them to provide me with signed contracts, copies of state licenses, etc... The letter also said that they requested the credit bureau update my account as "disputed" and that my account was verified, but the proof they provided me was a bill with my SSN, address, and phone number so I'm guessing at this point I should proceed with Part 1 Letter 2?

Answer: Yes, you are correct. If things eventually escalate to small claims, which it likely won't, it would be pretty interesting for them to show up without any evidence of your original contract.

Question: I've been sending out the letters and receiving responses from some and being ignored by others. So I'm at the point where I have no other option but to sue them for false/unfair/unproven reporting. What can I actually sue for? The Credit Reporting agencies are telling me that they legally don't have to send me this stuff. Can I sue the creditors for not sending me proof that I had an agreement with them?

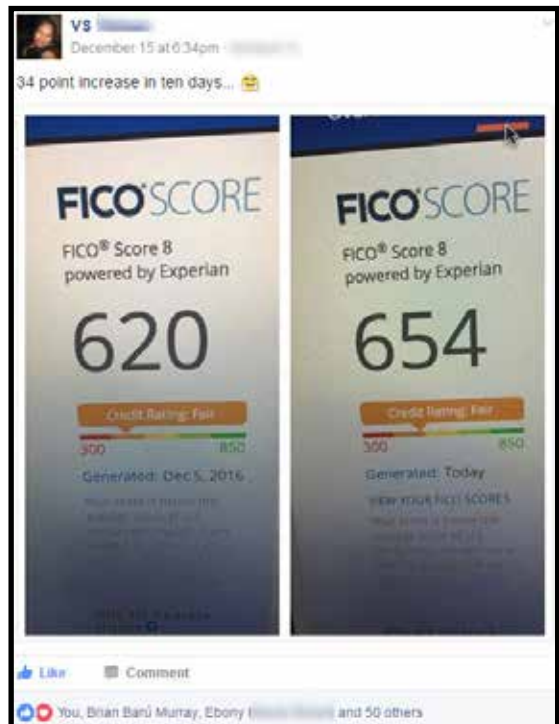
Answer: Make sure you read Chapter 4. Use common sense and take the letters you receive with a grain of salt. They may not be entirely accurate or truthful. They may just want you to conform to what's best for them and not you. If you do end up going to court, they'll have their day to explain if they show up. If they are playing hardball, it's more likely that they will take you seriously when they are faced with a court date. Many times they will settle prior to the case, or just not show

up at all. Which means you win by default.

Question: What if a letter goes unclaimed at the PO box?

Answer: Google their physical address and send the letter to them there, via certified mail. Without the signature, it is going to be tough to prove they violated the 30 day rule. Plus it sounds like your future letters will go unanswered at that PO Box address.

Question: Is it "Game Over" if they provide proof of my signature after the first letter?





Question: If I have 10 items to dispute, can I send 10 letters with 1 dispute per letter all at the same time? Or should I do 1, wait the 31 days, then do another? It could take eons that way, right?

Answer: Your goal is to have the highest percentage possible for them to make a mistake. That would mean 10 separate disputes. Clerical errors and your letters getting tossed into a pile, are both your friend.

Question: Can a Credit Bureau remove a disputed item and then reinsert it later?

Answer: Yes. This is a re-insertion.

Answer: No because the law states that they need to mark the item as “disputed” regardless. So there is a good chance they will violate the law and not place that notation on your report. Also, you may want to verify that the collector is even licensed to do business in your state AND check to see if they debt is beyond the statute of limitations in your state. If you disagree with what they are claiming you owe, you can still have your day in court.

It is very common, and you want to always keep an active eye on your reports.

Here’s why this is such a common problem: The CRA has only 30 days after getting a dispute letter to do one of two things: (1) produce evidence that the entry is correct or (2) remove the entry from the report. They don’t produce the evidence themselves; they have to get it from the creditor. If they don’t hear back from the creditor within the 30-day period, they have no choice



your credit report. See Chapter 7.

Question: Are your methods legal, or should I check with an attorney?

Answer: We are not licensed to give legal advice. We share our information for educational purposes only. What you choose to do is completely up to you. We have seen thousands of members have great success with our program. If you would like to check with a lawyer, we recommend LegalShield [http://](http://creditsecret.org/legalshield)

creditsecret.org/legalshield

but to remove the item. However, sometimes, the evidence arrives a few days or a few weeks later, and it may claim to prove the accuracy of the original entry. Then the Credit Bureau will start reporting it again. The Credit Bureau is supposed to notify you in writing within 5 days if an item is reinserted, but they don't always do it. This is a violation of the FCRA. See Chapter 2 for fighting a re-insertion.

Miscellaneous

Question: What is the shopping cart trick?

A: It is a method of getting credit cards without a hard inquiry on

Question: Should I get a debt consolidation loan to pay off my credit cards?

Answer: If you have a high credit utilization rate (maxing out your cards), then you are hurting your credit scores. A consolidation loan could rectify this. The fact that you paid off all the other cards will not only help your utilization, but probably lower your overall payment and interest rates.

Question: Is it better to pay off credit cards completely or keep a balance?

Answer: We have found the sweet spot to be between 10%-30%. So if you have a \$1,000 credit line, keeping the balance at \$100-\$300 would optimize your score.

Small Claims

Question: I filed a small claims lawsuit against a creditor recently. They responded with a motion to move the case from my local county to a US District Court citing that I am alleging violations of the FDCPA and that is a federal law and therefore it should be heard in federal court. Anyone dealt with this?

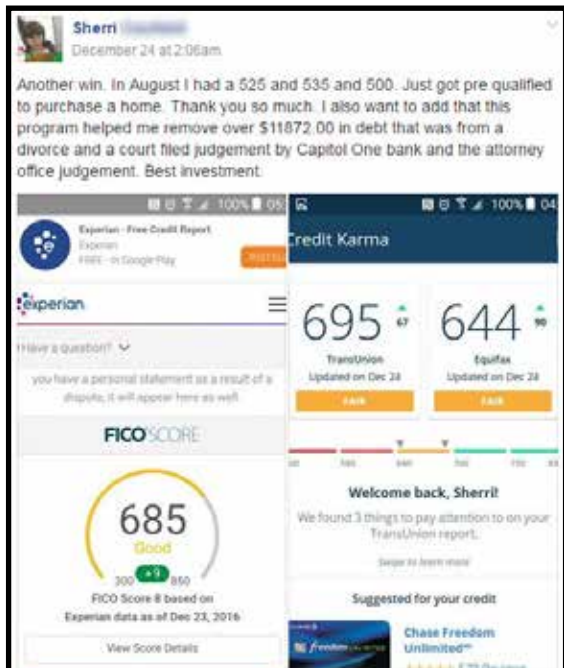
Answer: You can always amend your complaint to include a local state law that is similar to the federal law you are claiming they violated. Please see Chapter 4 for more information on this topic.

Question: I received pretty much an entire "book" from a collector with actual proof of signatures etc... but they completely disregarded the fact that I disputed the debt and there is no indication on my report(s) that it's been disputed. So where should I go from this point, wait the thirty days and file suit or should I send another letter?

Answer: It is up to you. You can give up and move on to the next account. Or you could send the next letter, letting them know they have violated federal law and that you intend to file a small claims suit. Or you can get even more aggressive and go ahead and file suit. In that case some members have found success by sending them a copy of the lawsuit, and letting them know you are willing to drop it in exchange for them deleting the inaccurate/unfair information.

Question: I've been sued by a collection agency. What should I do?

Answer: See our notes on this in Chapter 4.



Bankruptcy and Foreclosure

Question: Is this repair method only for removing negative trade lines on the credit report or does it also work for removing things like judgments and bankruptcies as well?

Answer: Everything is fair game. For a bankruptcy, you could begin using the system on items that say “included in bankruptcy”. And then you could tackle the bankruptcy itself using the information provided in Chapter 3.

Question: How long will a bankruptcy stay on my reports?

Answer: 7 years for completed Chapter 13 bankruptcies and 10 years for Chapter 7 bankruptcies. This period runs from the date the discharge order is entered, not the date the original petition was filed. It's true that most negative items must be removed after seven years, but in the case of Chapter 7 bankruptcies, Congress saw fit to extend the period an extra three years.

Question: How long will a foreclosure remain on my credit reports?

Answer: A foreclosure will remain on your credit report for seven years after the date of the foreclosure sale. As with a bankruptcy, you can challenge an inaccurate, unverifiable, or unfair foreclosure on your reports using the same process as any other derogatory item. And for our loophole regarding these types of accounts you can see Chapter 3.

Tax Liens and other Public Records

Question: For a Tax Lien dispute (Public Record), what is the appropriate strategy?

Answer: See our “public record” loophole in Chapter 3.



Question: Isn't there a statute of limitations?

Answer: Every state has a different statute of limitations for certain debts and public records. You can check yours in Statute of Limitations Chart near the end of this book.

Question: Can the system be used for credit card companies that have won a judgment against me? Is it still the same process starting with the letters to the original creditor? Does the fact that they went to court and got the judgment change what they need to provide me with if requested?

Answer: You actually can dispute a judgment directly with the credit bureaus using Part 2, Letter 1, not the court itself. Be sure to check our loophole on public records like judgments in Chapter 3

Credit Cards

Question: Should I close the credit card accounts I don't use?

Answer: We don't recommend closing unused credit card accounts. From the point of view of getting your scores as high as possible, it's better to keep these accounts open, even though you don't use them. This all has to do with the utilization ratio. The more open cards you have (within reason) with balances below 30 percent of the credit limit, the better.

When you close down an account, you no longer have it available, and it no longer counts in calculating your utilization ratio.

Question: Will a Goodwill Letter work with several late pays on one account?

Answer: You can certainly give it a try. See Chapter 2 for the Goodwill letter. Another option would be to dispute/challenge it with Part 1, Letter 1 if you don't agree with it.

Question: Should I send a Goodwill Letter certified, return receipt requested?

Answer: No, there is no need to do this. Stick them in an envelope and send them regular mail. Some members also fax them with success.

Question: I sent a Goodwill Letter and it didn't work. The creditor responded that "they are unable to update any information that was reported correctly."

Answer: You have a few options. Because the majority of these companies are so big, there is a good chance you could try again, reaching a different person that might very well help you out. If that fails, then you could dispute the late pays by starting the process with Part 1, Letter 1. If that fails, then skip to Part 2, Letter 1, and dispute the information with the Credit Bureaus.

Statute of Limitations Chart

A debt collector no longer has a right to sue for payment, once a debt ages past the statute of limitations, or SOL, on a state by state basis.

If a debt collector tries to take to you to court for a debt past the SOL, then

they are in violation of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act.

That chart below shows each state's SOL for delinquent debt.

State	Written contracts	Oral contracts	Promissory notes	Open-ended accounts (including credit cards)
Alabama	3	6	6	3
Alaska	3	6	3	3
Arizona	6	3	5	3
Arkansas	5	3	3	5
California	4	2	4	4
Colorado	6	6	6	6
Connecticut	6	3	6	6
Delaware	3	3	3	3
D.C.	3	3	3	3
Florida	5	4	5	4
Georgia	6	4	6	4 or 6**
Hawaii	6	6	6	6
Idaho	5	4	5	5
Illinois	10	5	10	5 or 10***
Indiana	10	6	10	6
Iowa	10	5	5	10
Kansas	3	3	3	3
Kentucky	15	5	15	5 or 15****
Louisiana	3	10	10	3
Maine	6	6	6	6
Maryland	3	3	6	3
Massachusetts	6	6	6	6
Michigan	6	6	6	6
Minnesota	6	6	6	6
Mississippi	3	3	3	3

State	Written contracts	Oral contracts	Promissory notes	Open-ended accounts (including credit cards)
Missouri	5	5	5	5
Montana	8	5	8	8
Nebraska	4	4	4	4
Nevada	4	4	4	4
New Hampshire	3	3	3	3
New Jersey	6	6	6	6
New Mexico	4	4	4	4
New York	6	6	6	6
North Carolina	3	3	5	3
North Dakota	6	6	6	6
Ohio	6	6	6	6
Oklahoma	5	3	5	3 or 5****
Oregon	6	6	6	6
Pennsylvania	4	4	4	4
Rhode Island	10	10	10	10
South Carolina	10	10	3	3
South Dakota	6	3	6	6
Tennessee	6	6	6	6
Texas	4	4	4	4
Utah	6	4	6	4
Vermont	5	3	6	3
Virginia	6	6	5	6
Washington	6	3	6	6
West Virginia	10	10	10	10
Wisconsin	6	6	10	6
Wyoming	10	8	10	8

** Georgia Court of Appeals came out with a decision on January 24, 2008 in Hill v. American Express that in Georgia the statute of limitations on a credit card is six years after the amount becomes due and payable.

*** An Illinois appeals court ruled on May 20, 2009, that the statute of limitations on a credit card debt without a written contract was 5 years.

**** State law doesn't specify the limitations on open accounts.

Glossary

Account

An account represents a relationship between a company (the account owner) and consumer, where the consumer purchases a product or service in such a way that represents the transfer of money over time.

Account Holder

The person(s) and or guarantor(s) in whose name an Account was established; the person or entity who or which is obligated to repay an Account, or if there are multiple persons or entities obligated to repay an Account, all such persons or entities collectively; the obligor or obligors on an Account.

Account Reviews

Inquiries made into a consumer's credit history by creditors, with whom the consumer has a current relationship.

Adjustable Rate Mortgage (ARM)

A mortgage where the interest rate fluctuates over the life of the loan.

Adverse Action

An unfavorable action, such as the denial of credit, insurance or employment, taken by a creditor or other entity, affecting a consumer. Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA), creditors must disclose the reasons for any adverse action.

Annual Fee

The yearly fee charged by a lender to maintain an account.

Annual Percentage Rate (APR)

The cost of credit at a yearly rate.

Balance Transfer

Moving your balance from one credit card to another to take advantage of features the new card offers.

Balance

The amount of money that you owe to a particular lender.

Bank Card

A credit card issued through a bank.

Bankruptcy

A legal proceeding that relieves you of the responsibility of paying your debts or provides you with protection while attempting to repay your debts.

Bankruptcy Discharge

The release, by the Bankruptcy Court, of the debtor from all of his dischargeable debts, whether then payable or not. A permanent injunction against any collection action for pre-filing dischargeable debts. The goal a debtor seeks when filing for bankruptcy protection.

Bankruptcy Dismissed

An order by the Bankruptcy Court terminating a specific bankruptcy case. Creditors may resume collection efforts upon dismissal of the debtor's case.

Better Business Bureau

The BBB serves as an intermediary between consumers and businesses, handling consumer disputes against businesses. The Better Business Bureau is not affiliated with any governmental agency.

Chapter 7 Bankruptcy

The chapter of the Bankruptcy Code that provides for court-administered liquidation of the assets of a financially troubled individual or business.

Chapter 11 Bankruptcy

The chapter of the Bankruptcy Code that is usually used for the reorganization of a financially troubled business. Used as an alternative to liquidation under Chapter 7.

Chapter 13 Bankruptcy

The chapter of the Bankruptcy Code in which debtors repay debts according to a plan accepted by the debtor, the creditors, and the court.

Charge Card

A credit card that requires full payment of the bill each month; no interest is charged. The American Express Card is an example.

Charge-Off

A loan or credit card debt written off as uncollectible from the borrower. The debt, however, remains valid and subject to collection.

ChexSystems

ChexSystems is a check verification service and consumer credit reporting agency owned by the eFunds subsidiary of Fidelity National Information Services. It provides information about the use of deposit accounts by consumers.

Closed by Grantor

A credit account that has been closed at the grantor's request wherein a creditor cancels your charge privileges.

Collection

When a borrower falls behind, the lender contacts them in an effort to bring the loan current. The loan goes to "collection."

Consumer

A "consumer" is defined as an individual.

Consumer Report

A "consumer report" is any written, oral, or other communication of any information by a Consumer reporting agency that bears on a consumer's creditworthiness, credit standing, Credit capacity, character, general

reputation, personal characteristics, or mode of living which is used or expected to be used or collected, in whole or in part, for the purpose of Serving as a factor in establishing the consumer's eligibility for:

1. Credit or insurance to be used primarily for personal, family, or household purposes
2. Employment purposes; or any other purpose authorized under section 604 (15 U.S.C. § 1681b).

Consumer Reporting Agency (CRA)

An agency that is a clearinghouse for information on the credit payment history of individuals or firms. There are three major credit bureaus, Equifax, Experian and TransUnion, and they are regulated by the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA).

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) is an agency of the United States government responsible for consumer protection in the financial sector. CFPB jurisdiction includes banks, credit unions, securities firms, payday lenders, mortgage-servicing operations, foreclosure relief services, debt collectors and other financial companies operating in the United States.

Credit

A trust or promise to buy now and pay later under designated terms for goods or services.

Credit Card

A card that allows a consumer to pay a portion or all of the outstanding amount each month and has a credit limit. Visa, MasterCard, and Discover are examples.

Credit Check

An inquiry to confirm a consumer's credit payment history.

Credit Fraud

A case when someone has stolen a consumer's identity by fraudulently using that consumer's social security number or other personal information to acquire credit in his or her name.

Credit Dispute

To request an investigation of the accuracy of information on a credit report.

Credit File

The collection of information each of the credit reporting agencies maintains in their databases.

Credit History

The record of a consumer's credit accounts and manner of payment (MOP). Credit history includes high credit, current balance, credit limit, and 24 months or more of MOP history.

Credit Inquiries

Credit inquiries are a notation listed on your credit report that a lender has checked your credit file. “Hard” inquiries can impact your Credit Score, while “soft” ones don’t. Creditors see only your “Hard” inquiries.

Credit Limit

The maximum amount you are allowed to borrow from a lender under the terms of your agreement for an account.

Credit Monitoring Service

Services that monitor activity in your credit file and alert you to key changes in your file.

Credit Repair

Credit repair is a general term used to describe the practice of improving or rehabilitating one’s financial reputation (creditworthiness) with creditors.

Credit Report

A record of the information in your financial credit file that is used by a lender, employer, or others to help evaluate you when you apply for a loan, job or in certain other circumstances.

Credit Risk

An assessment of a consumer’s likelihood of fulfilling the terms of a credit agreement.

Credit Score

A credit score is a numerical index which represents an estimate of an individual’s financial creditworthiness. It is based on a subset of the information in an individual’s credit report.

Creditor

Person or business to whom a debt is owed.

Creditworthiness

An assessment of a consumer’s past credit behavior that allows a potential lender to decide whether or not to extend credit. Credit reporting agencies are private, for-profit companies that collect and sell information about a person’s credit history. Typical clients include banks, mortgage lenders and credit card companies that use the information to screen applicants for loans and credit cards.

Current Balance

(a) the unpaid balance for each account;

(b) the Account balance, which does not include any finance or late charges assessed after Charge-off Date.

Date Closed

The date when a credit agreement or account was terminated.

Date Opened

The date when a credit agreement or account was established.

Date of Last Activity (DOLA)

The date when one of three things happens on any active account: the consumer makes a payment, misses a payment, or the balance of the account increases

Debt Consolidation

Debt consolidation entails taking out one loan to pay off many others. This is often done to secure a lower interest rate, secure a fixed interest rate or for the convenience of servicing only one loan.

Debt Settlement

A process to reduce or pay off old debt by negotiating a lower amount due with the creditor.

Debt-to-Income Ratio

Your income compared to the debt you owe.

Default

Failure to fulfill an agreed-upon financial obligation, such as making a loan payment.

Delinquency

Past-due payment on a loan.

Dispute

If you have reviewed your credit report and found some data to be inaccurate, you can contact the companies involved to have it investigated and/or removed. This is considered a dispute.

Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act (FACTA)

A federal law that amended the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act in many areas. The law provided, among other things, additional protections for consumers in connection with the prevention and remediation of identity theft and the accuracy of credit reports. It includes your right to a free copy of your credit report from each of the three major credit reporting agencies every 12 months, which must be requested through the centralized source established under the FACT Act.

Fair Credit Billing Act (FCBA)

This Act, amending the Truth in Lending Act, requires prompt written acknowledgment of consumer billing complaints and investigation of billing errors by creditors. The amendment prohibits creditors from taking actions that adversely affect the consumer's credit standing until an investigation is completed, and affords other protection during disputes. The amendment also requires that creditors promptly post payments to the consumer's account, and either refund overpayments or credit them to the consumer's account

Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA)

Fair Credit Reporting Act (effective April 25, 1971) is part of a group of acts in the Federal Consumer Credit Protection Act. The Act protects information collected by consumer reporting agencies such as credit bureaus, medical information companies and tenant screening services. Information in a consumer report cannot be provided to anyone who does not have a purpose specified in the Act. Companies that provide information to consumer reporting agencies also have specific legal obligations, including the duty to investigate disputed information. Also, users of the information for credit, insurance, or employment purposes must notify the consumer when an adverse action is taken on the basis of such reports. Further, users must identify the company that provided the report, so that the accuracy and completeness of the report may be verified or contested by the consumer.

Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (FDCPA)

Under this Act (Title VIII of the Consumer Credit Protection Act), third-party debt collectors are prohibited from employing deceptive or abusive conduct in the collection of consumer debts incurred for personal, family, or household purposes. Such collectors may not, for example, contact debtors at odd hours, subject them to repeated telephone calls, threaten legal action

that is not actually contemplated, or reveal to other persons the existence of debts.

Federal Trade Commission (FTC)

A federal agency whose duty is to investigate unfair methods of competition in business, fraudulent advertising, etc., and to restrain or prosecute those charged with such practices. The Commission's primary purpose is to protect consumers.

FICO® Score

A FICO® score is a credit score produced from models developed by Fair Isaac Corporation. The score is used to measure a consumer's creditworthiness and risk, and is in use worldwide. FICO® scores range from 300 - 850 and are available through all of the major consumer reporting agencies in the United States: Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion. (FICO® is a registered trademark of Fair Isaac Corporation).

Finance Charges

The amount you are charged to use credit.

Fixed-Rate Mortgage

A mortgage where the interest rate of the loan remains the same over the life of the loan.

Foreclosure

The legal process by which a lender, usually a bank or other financial institution, acquires real property because the borrower failed to pay the mortgage.

Freeze

Also known as a security freeze, you restrict access to your credit report, which in turn makes it more difficult for creditors to see your credit report.

Furnishers

Any company that submits information about you to be included on your credit report.

Garnishment

A legal process whereby a lender who has obtained a judgment on a debt can receive full or partial payment by seizure of a portion of the debtor's assets (wages, bank account, etc.).

Grace Period

The number of days between a statement due date and the payment due date during which you do not incur finance charges.

Gross Monthly Income

What you earn before taxes are deducted.

HIPAA

HIPAA is the acronym for the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act that was passed by Congress in 1996. HIPAA Mandates industry-wide standards for health care information on electronic billing and other processes; and requires the protection and confidential handling of protected health information.

Identity Confirmation

The successful verification of a consumer's identity.

Identity Theft / Identity Fraud

A crime that involves using another's name, Social Security Number or other personal information to acquire credit, make purchases or commit a crime in that name.

Inquiry

An examination of a consumer's credit history. When your credit report is made available to another party, such as a lender, landlord or insurer.

Installment Loan

A credit account in which the amount of the payment and the number of payments are predetermined or fixed.

Interest

The cost of borrowing or lending money, usually a percentage of the amount borrowed or loaned.

Interest Rate

A percentage of money charged by a lender, for borrowing money. For example, you might get charged 12.5% interest on any credit card balance carried over, or you might qualify for a 4.5% car loan.

Judgment

A final court ruling resolving the key questions in a lawsuit and determining the rights and obligations of the opposing parties.

Last Contact Date

The date when the debtor or the debtor's legal representative last responded, either by a written or verbal response, to debt collection action.

Late Fee

A fee attached to a delinquent account.

Late Payment

A delinquent payment; a failure to deliver a loan or debt payment on or before the time agreed. Late payments are reported to the credit bureaus by creditors, and appear as negative items on your credit reports.

LexisNexis

LexisNexis (which acquired ChoicePoint) is the largest data-broker in the world and reseller of credit information. As of 2006, the company has the world's largest electronic database for legal and public-records related information.

Lien

A legal claim upon real estate or personal property for the satisfaction of a debt. Liens you agree to are called security interests and include mortgages, home equity loans, car loans and personal loans for which you pledge the property to guarantee repayment. Liens created without your consent are called nonconsensual liens and include judgment liens (liens filed by a creditor who has sued you and obtained a judgment), tax liens and mechanic's liens (liens filed by a contractor who worked on your house but wasn't paid).

Line of Credit

Credit limit established by a creditor

Metro 2

Metro 2 is a data specification created by the Consumer Data Industry Association for credit reporting data furnishers (who are members of the credit bureau with a data furnishing service agreement) to report consumers' credit history information to major credit bureaus electronically and in a standardized format.

Open account

An account that is active or still being paid.

Paid as agreed

A designation on the credit report that indicates the consumer is repaying the credit account according to the terms of the credit agreement.

Permissible Purpose

As defined in 604 of the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA), only specific reasons for requesting a credit report are deemed “permissible.” Requests not meeting this criteria must be denied.

Principal

The outstanding balance of a loan, exclusive of interest and other charges.

Points

Fees paid to a lender for a loan. They are often linked to the interest rate and are generally used to lower the interest rate of the loan.

Preapproval

When a mortgage lender reviews your credit and commits to a specific loan amount.

Prequalification

When a mortgage lender reviews your credit history, income, assets and liabilities in order to determine an appropriate loan amount.

Principal Balance

Defined as account principal and other legally collectible costs, expenses, and interest accrued prior to the Charge-off Date, less payments or settlements since charge off, if any.

Public Record

Information obtained from court records about such things as state or federal tax liens, bankruptcy filings and judgments against you in civil actions. Public records are open to any person who requests them.

Reaged Account

An account that is brought to a current status, even though the total past due amount has not been paid. Some unscrupulous companies may do this in order to start the Date of Last Activity over again, in an effort to reset the typical 7 year clock for a negative item to automatically fall off of your credit report.

Repossession

The action taken (usually by a financial institution) to recover an object that was used as collateral, rented or leased in a transaction.

Revolving Balance

The total balance of all revolving credit accounts.

Revolving Charge Account

Credit automatically available up to a predetermined limit so long as a consumer makes regular payments.

Revolving Credit

An account that requires at least a specified minimum payment each month plus a service charge on the balance, which can fluctuate up to the credit limit. As the balance declines, the amount of the service charge, or interest, also declines.

Secured Credit Card

A credit card secured by a savings account.

Settled In Full

The Debtor has satisfied the Account obligation with full payment of the amount due.

Settlement

(a) payment of the adjustment amount of an account, including principal, interest and fees;

(b) a copy of a written settlement agreement or other written documentation evidencing a settlement.

Small Claims Court

Small claims court is a special court where disputes are resolved quickly and inexpensively. In small claims court, the rules are simplified and the hearing is informal. Attorneys are generally not allowed. The person who files the claim is called the plaintiff.

State Attorney General

The attorney general is an executive office in all 50 states that serves as the chief legal advisor and chief law enforcement officer for the state government and is empowered to prosecute violations of state law, represent the state in legal disputes and issue legal advice to state agencies and the legislature.

Tax Lien

A charge upon real or personal property for the satisfaction of debts related to taxes.

Term

The amount of time in which a loan must be repaid in full.

Variable Rate

A variable rate is an interest rate that may fluctuate over the life of a loan, typically in response to changes in the interest rate marketplace.

VantageScore®

First announced in March 2006, VantageScore® is the latest addition in consumer credit scoring models. Its methodologies and algorithms were cooperatively developed by the three major consumer reporting agencies: Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion. VantageScores® range from 501 - 900.

Identity Theft and How to Protect Yourself

As you may have heard at some point, Equifax had a giant cybersecurity breach occur between mid-May and July of 2017, which compromised the personal information of as many as 143 million Americans — almost half the country. Cybercriminals accessed sensitive information -- including names, social security numbers, birth dates, addresses, and the numbers of some driver's licenses. Equifax even admitted that credit card numbers for about 209,000 U.S. customers were exposed, as was "personal identifying information" belonging to roughly 182,000 U.S. customers involved in credit report disputes.

Unlike other data breaches, not all of the people affected by the Equifax breach may be aware that they're customers of the company. Equifax gets its data from credit card companies, banks, retailers,



and lenders who report on the credit activity of individuals to credit reporting agencies, as well as by purchasing public records.

Obviously, this is very bad news. It's also one of the top reasons to make sure you always monitor your credit reports, bank statements, and credit card statements. The hackers hang on to this information for a long time as well, so never think that enough time has passed that you can't be affected. They can pounce at any time.

Take These Steps to Protect Yourself From Identity Theft

1. Review your credit report at least once a year to be certain that it doesn't include accounts that you have not opened. If you don't already have it, sign up for credit monitoring. creditsecret.org/scores
2. Be sure to secure your social security number (SSN). Never carry your social security card in your wallet or write your number on your checks.
3. Don't respond to unsolicited requests for personal information (your name, birthdate, social security number, or bank account number) by phone, email, or online.
4. Request a freeze of your credit reports from all three credit bureaus.
5. Never leave mail pile up in your mailbox. Always place a hold when you are away from home for several days.
6. Use the built-in security features on mobile devices, especially if you have contacts, banking websites and applications saved.
7. Always use updated firewall settings when on a public wi-fi network. Consider using a virtual private network, which can give you the privacy of secured private network.
8. Regularly review your credit card and bank account statements looking for unauthorized transactions.
9. Shred receipts, credit offers, account statements, and expired credit cards, to prevent "dumpster divers" from getting your personal information.



10. Store personal information in a safe place at home and work.
11. Create and use complex passwords that hackers cannot guess. Always change your password if a company that you do business with has a security breach of its online resources.
12. Federal laws require credit card companies to have consumer protections in place, and they have dedicated fraud departments to investigate all claims. This is one of the reasons you always want to use a credit card for online purchases versus a debit card.

Recovering From Identity Theft

First, you will need to figure out what kind of fraud has occurred. If you see an error on a credit card statement or financial account, you'll need to contact that company to report it and possibly file a claim.

If you believe fraud has occurred, the FTC recommends that you place a fraud alert with one of the three major credit reporting agencies. They are, by Federal Law, required to report the fraud alert to the other two agencies.

The alert automatically entitles you to a free copy of your credit report. Review your credit report for any accounts you did not open, or activity you did not conduct, and confirm that the report has your correct name, address and Social Security number.

Next, you will want to file a complaint form with the trade commission and an identity theft report with your local police department. Be sure to make multiple copies of these reports and file the originals safely away. Typically, identity theft is difficult to prosecute, but these documents can be helpful to the credit agencies and the financial institutions you do business with.

The first fraud alert is, for example, if you lose your wallet. That requires potential

creditors to take certain steps to verify your identity before opening new accounts in your name. The next kind of alert is an extended fraud alert. The extended fraud alert lasts seven years and will require any creditor to contact you personally before any new accounts are opened.

Credit Freezes

One of the other precautions you can take is to put a freeze on your credit report. By putting a freeze on your credit report, businesses and creditors cannot check your credit history unless you temporarily lift the freeze. The costs and rules vary state by state, so be sure to check with the credit bureaus for your specific steps.

Equifax Credit Freeze:

<https://www.freeze.equifax.com>

TransUnion Credit Freeze:

<https://www.transUnion.com/credit-freeze/place-credit-freeze>

Experian Credit Freeze:

<https://www.experian.com/freeze/center.html>

Contacting Your Credit Companies

Be careful when dealing with the companies that have your accounts that have been affected. You don't want to just close accounts as that may negatively affect your credit scores. Inform the creditor that you have reason to suspect you are a victim of fraud and ask it for the company's policy in situations like these.

Sometimes, the creditor will simply assign you a new account number, such as a credit card that might have been compromised. They will shut off the current card, and simply issue you a new one with a new number.

Whatever choices you make, always make sure to document every person you speak to, the date and time you spoke with them, and the request you made. You may need this for any future interactions about your account.

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