

## Preventing Credit Card Fraud



*This guide provides information on basic steps you can take to help keep someone from using your credit cards.*

- ❖ *Someone goes through trash to find discarded receipts or carbon and then uses your account numbers.*
- ❖ *A clerk makes an extra imprint from your credit or charge card and uses it to make personal charges.*

Credit card fraud costs cardholders and issuers hundreds of millions of dollars each year. While theft is the most obvious form of fraud, it can occur in other ways. For example, someone may use your card number without your knowledge.

It's not always possible to prevent credit card fraud from happening. There are a few steps you can take to make it more difficult for a thief to capture your card numbers and minimize the possibility.



### Guarding Against Fraud

Here are some tips to help you protect yourself from credit card fraud.

Do:

- Sign your cards as soon as they arrive.
- Carry your cards separately from your wallet, in a zippered compartment, a business card holder or another small pouch.
- Keep a record of your account numbers, their expiration dates and the phone number and address of each company in a secure place.
- Keep an eye on your card during the transaction and get it back as quickly as possible.
- Void incorrect receipts.
- Destroy carbons.
- Save receipts to compare with billing statements.
- Open bills promptly and reconcile accounts monthly, just as you would your checking account.
- Report any questionable charges promptly and in writing to the card issuer.
- Notify card companies in advance of a change in address.

Do Not:

- Lend your card(s) to anyone.
- Leave cards or receipts lying around.
- Sign a blank receipt. When you sign a receipt, draw a line through any blank spaces above the total.

- Write your account number on a postcard or the outside of an envelope.
- Give out your account number over the phone unless you're making the call to a company you know as reputable. If you have questions about a company, check it out with the Better Business Bureau.

### Reporting Losses and Fraud

If you lose your credit or charge cards or if you realize they've been lost or stolen, immediately call the issuer(s). Many companies have toll-free numbers and 24-hour service to deal with such emergencies. By law, once you report the loss or theft, you have no further responsibility for unauthorized charges. In any event, your maximum liability under federal law is \$50 per card.

If you suspect fraud, you may be asked to sign a statement under oath that you did not make the purchase(s) in question. (See brochure for more information.)

### For More Information

The FTC works for the consumer to prevent fraudulent, deceptive and unfair business practices in the marketplace and to provide information to help consumers spot, stop and avoid them. To file a [complaint](#) or to get [free information on consumer issues](#), visit [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov) or call (877) FTC-HELP (877) 382-4357 TTY: 1-866-653-4261. The FTC enters Internet, telemarketing, identity theft and other fraud-related complaints into [Consumer Sentinel](#), a secure, online database available to hundreds of civil and criminal law enforcement agencies in the U.S. and abroad.