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Credit report review checklist

Once you get your credit report, you will want to review it carefully. Ordering it is not enough—you have to read it. Credit reports may have mistakes. And if there are mistakes, you are the only one who is likely to find them.

Use the following worksheet to review each section of your credit report. Do this for each credit report you get throughout the year. Then, keep the completed checklist with your credit report.

Your credit report contains a lot of personal and financial information. Be sure to keep any hard copies of your credit reports in a safe and secure place. If you do not want to hang on to your credit reports, be sure to shred them before getting rid of them.

Today's date: _____ **Name of credit reporting agency** _____

✓	Checklist item
	Is your name correct?
	Is your Social Security number correct?
	Is your current address correct? Is your current phone number correct?
	Are the previous addresses they have listed for you correct?
	Is your marital status listed correctly?
	Is your employment history accurate?
	Is everything listed in the personal information section correct?
	Is there anything listed in the public record information? Is it correct? Highlight the information you think may not be correct.
	Review each item under the credit account (trade account) section. Are the accounts on the list still open?



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	Are all of the current balances correct?
	Are accounts where you are an authorized user or joint owner listed?
	Are zero balances recorded for debts discharged in bankruptcy? For debts paid in full?
	Are you listed as a co-signer on a loan? Is this correct?
	Are accounts that you closed listed as "closed by the consumer"?
	Is negative information reported on each credit account correct? Look for late payments and missed payments. Highlight those items you think are not correct.
	Are any accounts listed more than once? Check to make sure the same account is not listed multiple times in the collections section.
	Is old negative information still being reported? If yes, highlight the information that has exceeded the negative information reporting limit, which is usually seven years.
	Do you suspect that you have been the victim of identity theft after reviewing your credit reports?

If you find something wrong with your credit report, you should dispute it. You may contact both the credit reporting company and the creditor or institution that provided the information. Explain what you think is wrong and why.

To correct mistakes, it can help to contact both the credit reporting company and the source of the mistake. You may file a dispute not only with the credit reporting company, but also directly with the source of the information, and include the same supporting documentation. However, there are certain types of disputes that creditors and furnishing institutions are not required to investigate.

You may file your dispute online at each credit reporting agency's website.

If you file a dispute by mail, see the example letter earlier in this module. Your dispute letter should include: Your complete name, address, and telephone number; your report confirmation number (if you have one); and the account number for any account you may be disputing.

In your letter, clearly identify each mistake, state the facts, explain why you are disputing the information, and request that it be removed or corrected. You may want to enclose a copy of the



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portion of your report that contains the disputed items and circle or highlight the disputed items. Include copies (not originals) of documents that support your position.

Send your letter of dispute to credit reporting companies by certified mail, return receipt requested, so that you will have a record that your letter was received. You can contact the nationwide credit reporting companies online, by mail, or by phone:

You can contact the primary nationwide credit reporting agencies online, by mail, or by phone:

Equifax

Online: <http://www.ai.equifax.com/CreditInvestigation>

By mail: Download and complete the dispute form:

<http://www.equifax.com/cp/MailInDisclosureRequest.pdf>

Mail the dispute form with your letter to:

Equifax Information Services LLC

P.O. Box 740256

Atlanta, GA 30374

By phone: Phone number provided on credit report or (800) 864-2978

Experian

Online: <http://www.experian.com/disputes/main.html>

By mail: Use the address provided on your credit report or mail your letter to:

Experian

P.O. Box 4000

Allen, TX 75013

By phone: Phone number provided on credit report or (888) 397-3742

TransUnion

Online: <http://www.transunion.com/personal-credit/credit-disputes-alerts-freezes.page>

By mail: Download and complete the dispute form:

<http://www.transunion.com/docs/rev/personal/InvestigationRequest.pdf>

Mail the dispute form with your letter to:

TransUnion Consumer Solutions

P.O. Box 2000,

Chester, PA 19022-2000

By phone: (800) 916-8800



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Keep copies of your dispute letter and enclosures.



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If you suspect that the error on your report is a result of identity theft, visit the Federal Trade Commission's *Fighting Back Against Identity Theft* website for information about identity theft and steps to take if you have been victimized. This will include filing a fraud alert and possibly filing a security freeze.

If the error is with a specific account, you can first contact the creditor (information furnisher) to resolve the dispute.

Whether you file your dispute directly with the creditor (information furnisher) or the credit reporting agency, they generally have 30 - 45 days to investigate your claim and 5 days to send you written notice once their investigation is over.

If the dispute results in a business changing the information it reported about you, the business must notify the credit reporting agencies. And vice versa, if you filed your dispute with a credit reporting agency, it must fix your file and notify the creditor of the error.

✓	Steps to filing a dispute
	Write a letter to the credit bureau that sent you the report.
	Provide the account number for the item you feel is not accurate.
	For each item, explain concisely why you believe it is not accurate.
	If you can, include copies of bills or cleared checks (money order stubs) that show you have paid them on time.
	Provide your address and telephone number at the end of the letter so the credit bureau can contact you for more information if necessary.
	Make a copy of your letter before you send it to the credit bureau.
	Send the letter. You may choose to use Certified Mail with Return Receipt to have proof of when the letter was received. The consumer reporting agency or the creditor generally has 30-45 days to investigate your claim.