



**HOW TO DISPUTE AN ERROR ON A CREDIT REPORT.** Notify the consumer credit reporting company, in writing, regarding the information you believe is inaccurate or incomplete in your credit report.

**Be sure to include your name and address** and explain in detail why you're disputing the information and requesting that it be removed or corrected.

**Attach copies** (not originals) of any documents that support your claim.

**Send your letter by certified mail** return receipt requested so that you have proof of receipt by the credit reporting company, and also be sure to send a copy to the creditor or provider of the information.

**Keep copies of all of the documentation** that you send to the credit reporting companies.

## DIVISION OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

### Credit Counseling Services

If you realize that you cannot make scheduled payments to a creditor, you should contact the creditor to see whether you can work out a repayment plan. If this doesn't work, you may want to consider contacting a credit counseling service for advice on managing your money and debts and to help you develop a payment plan and a budget. Once you have identified potential credit counseling agencies, check with the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs to see whether any consumer complaints have been filed against them. Please note that the absence of complaints does not guarantee that the company is legitimate. The next step is to interview the agencies and find out more information. For a list of specific questions to ask, please visit: [www.NJConsumerAffairs.gov](http://www.NJConsumerAffairs.gov).

### CONDUCT REGULAR MAINTENANCE

**It is vital that you review your credit report on a regular basis, and correct mistakes immediately.** Under the New Jersey Fair Credit Reporting Act, and also federal law, consumers are entitled to a free credit report annually.

### WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CREDIT & CREDIT REPAIR?

Contact the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs at:

[www.NJConsumerAffairs.gov](http://www.NJConsumerAffairs.gov)

or call:

**888-656-6225**

*(toll free in N.J.)*

**973-424-8150**

or write:

N.J. Division of Consumer Affairs  
Consumer Service Center  
P. O. Box 45025  
Newark, NJ 07101

You can also contact the Federal Trade Commission at:  
[www.ftc.gov/moneymatters](http://www.ftc.gov/moneymatters)

*You can obtain free copies of your credit report from the three national credit bureaus once every 12 months by making a single request to:*

**[www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com)**  
Annual Credit Report Request Service  
P.O. Box 105281  
Atlanta, GA 30348-5281  
**877-322-8228**

What is **CREDIT** and why is it **SO IMPORTANT**



**Be An Informed Consumer...**  
**We Can Help!**

**Toll-Free in N.J. 888-656-6225**

**[www.NJConsumerAffairs.gov](http://www.NJConsumerAffairs.gov)**



STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
DIVISION OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

**[www.NJConsumerAffairs.gov](http://www.NJConsumerAffairs.gov)**

## WHAT IS CREDIT AND WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT?

**CREDIT** is your reputation as a borrower. It tells others how likely you are to repay your loans. Your credit rating is based upon information about your borrowing and payment history.

### YOUR CREDIT IS CHECKED WHEN YOU ATTEMPT TO:

- ✓ buy a home
- ✓ get a car or student loan
- ✓ apply for a credit card
- ✓ rent an apartment
- ✓ apply for a job.

A poor credit rating can result in your *inability* to do any of these things!

**DID YOU KNOW** that there are companies that keep track of whether you pay your bills and make payments on time? These companies then make this information available in the form of a credit report and a credit score. Good credit means that you have a good history of making payments on time. Bad credit means that you have a poor history of repaying your loans.

**CREDIT** is a double-edged sword. We all use it, but it is also easy to abuse it. It can also get out of hand very easily.

[www.NJConsumerAffairs.gov](http://www.NJConsumerAffairs.gov)

## WHAT IS CREDIT AND WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT?

### BEWARE OF CREDIT REPAIR SCAMS!

We've all seen, heard or read advertisements on TV, radio and in newspapers which try to sell the services of credit repair companies that promise to erase or fix bad credit. Be careful as these may be credit repair scams intended to take advantage of you.



**CREDIT REPAIR COMPANIES ARE PROHIBITED FROM MAKING DECEPTIVE CLAIMS ABOUT THEIR SERVICES!**

Some companies go so far as to promise to get you a new credit identification.

**STOP! THIS IS FRAUD AND IT IS A CRIME!**

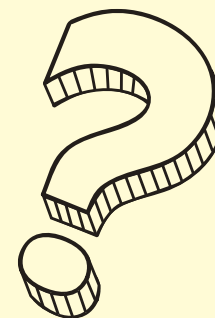
### CREDIT REPAIR COMPANIES OFTEN TRY TO MISLEAD CONSUMERS BY PROMISING TO:

- ✓ Hide their bad credit information
- ✓ Give them a new credit identity
- ✓ Offer to create a new credit file for them with a fake Social Security number.

**NO ONE CAN LEGALLY REMOVE ACCURATE AND TIMELY NEGATIVE INFORMATION FROM A CREDIT REPORT.** If you have a poor credit history, the only thing that will improve your credit report is the passage of time and the timely repayment of debt.

**EVERYTHING THAT A CREDIT REPAIR COMPANY CAN DO FOR YOU LEGALLY, YOU CAN DO FOR YOURSELF AT LITTLE OR NO COST.** While you can't remove accurate negative information from your credit report, the law does allow you to request an investigation of any information you dispute as inaccurate or incomplete.

**DID YOU KNOW** that when a business files a credit report about your account with a consumer reporting company, the business submitting the credit report must include as part of its submission a copy of all of the correspondence you have sent to the business that disputes the assertion(s) of credit delinquency?



A credit reporting company must investigate all of the inaccurate- or incomplete-information claims that it receives in writing within 30 days, unless the company considers your dispute frivolous, and then it must inform you of its findings within 10 days of concluding its investigation.

For further details concerning how to dispute credit report errors go to: [www.ftc.gov/credit](http://www.ftc.gov/credit).

**DID YOU KNOW** that a credit repair company cannot take money from you before services have been completed?



*It is important to remember that decisions you make today about how you borrow money, pay your bills and manage your finances will affect you in the future.*

*A bad credit history can haunt you for a very long time... seven years or more. That is why it is so important to maintain good credit.*

Toll-Free in N.J. 888-656-6225

[www.NJConsumerAffairs.gov](http://www.NJConsumerAffairs.gov)