

Consumers also must be able to get credit score information from credit bureaus for “a reasonable fee” as set by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC).

- Financial institutions must notify members before or within 30 days of reporting negative information about them to credit bureaus regarding an account, extension of credit, or transaction.

- Mortgage lenders that use credit scores must provide applicants with the credit score information.

Fighting ID theft

The FACT Act also provided consumers with identity theft protections:

- The FTC developed model forms to standardize how consumers can report identity theft to creditors and consumer reporting agencies.

- The Act established a nationwide fraud alert system to notify all prospective users of credit reports that a consumer may be a victim of identity theft. If a consumer places a fraud alert on his credit report, anyone who uses the report must follow procedures to ensure that any future requests for credit are by the true consumer, not an identity thief posing as the consumer. The law also enables active duty military personnel to place special alerts on their files when they are deployed overseas.

- The FACT Act helps prevent identity theft before it occurs by requiring merchants to leave all but the last five digits of a credit card number off store receipts. This way, slips of paper that many people throw away do not contain their

full credit card number—a key to financial identity.

- Before the FACT Act, identity theft victims had to call all their credit card issuers and the three major credit bureaus to alert them to crime. Under the FACT Act, credit bureaus must share identity theft complaints, and consumers only need to make one call to receive advice, set off a nationwide fraud alert, and protect their credit standing.

- If a financial institution receives a request for an additional credit card shortly after an address change, it must contact the consumer at the former address to make sure there isn't fraudulent activity.

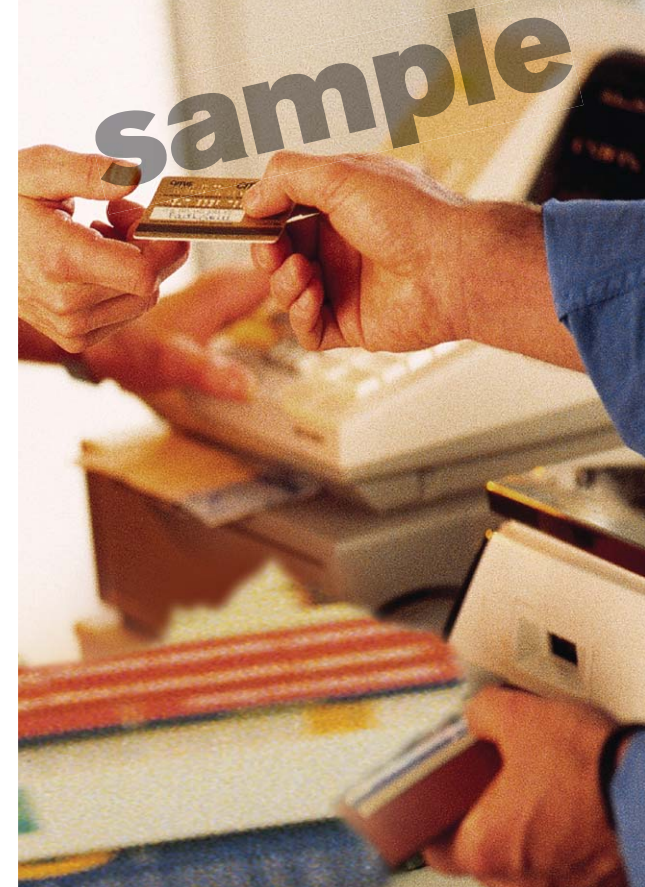
- Consumers can directly ask credit unions and others who provide information to credit bureaus to investigate errors or disputed items in their credit reports.



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Your Rights Under the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act



Protecting credit and fighting identity theft are two big financial issues consumers face today. A comprehensive federal law helps consumers understand their credit rights, understand their credit reports, and fight identity theft.

The Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act (FACT Act) addresses consumers' rights to understand and protect the information in their credit reports and to get help when their financial information has been stolen. The FACT Act amended the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) in 2003. The FCRA has existed since 1970 to promote the accuracy, fairness, and privacy of consumer report information. However, the FACT Act enhanced the FCRA's consumer protections and imposed several new obligations on consumer reporting agencies and financial institutions.

The FACT Act accomplished key government priorities to help all Americans, of every income level and background, to build good credit and confront the problem of identity theft by:

- Ensuring that lenders make loan decisions based on fair and accurate credit reports.
- Improving the quality of credit information, and protecting consumers against identity theft.

The FACT Act established the Financial Literacy and Education Commission and called for a national financial literacy campaign.

The Act restricted the use of medical information in determining a consumer's eligibility for credit, and also limited

the sharing of medical information with affiliated companies under certain circumstances.

Understanding your credit report

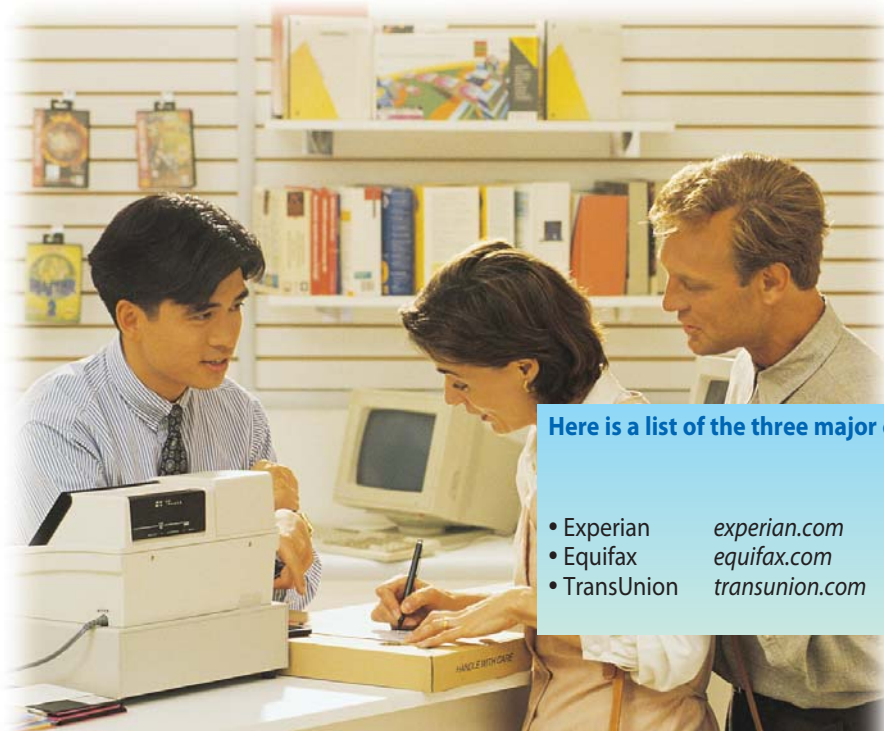
These provisions address your rights to have better information about the contents and use of your credit report under the FACT Act.

- Consumers have greater access to their credit reports and credit scores. The Act increased consumers' ability to correct inaccuracies in their credit reports.

- Consumers receive clear and thorough information about the ability to opt out of pre-screened credit offers and to opt out of information sharing between affiliated companies for marketing purposes.

- Financial institutions that provide information to credit bureaus must ensure the accuracy and integrity of the information provided to credit bureaus.

- Each major credit bureau must provide one free credit report annually to consumers who request a copy (annualcreditreport.com).



The FACT Act helps prevent identity theft before it occurs by requiring merchants to leave all but the last five digits of a credit card number off store receipts.

Here is a list of the three major credit bureaus:

		Request a copy of credit report	Fraud units
• Experian	experian.com	888-397-3742	888-397-3742
• Equifax	equifax.com	800-685-1111	800-525-6285
• TransUnion	transunion.com	800-916-8800	800-680-7289