

Smart Ways to Use Credit Cards

Someone suddenly took away all of your credit cards. Credit cards are more convenient and safer than carrying cash, so imagine life without them.

Credit cards have evolved, new products and services make using them even more convenient.

Here are ways to get the most out of your credit cards.

1. Pay on time and maintain a good credit rating. Pay your credit card bills on time, stay well within your credit limits and be careful not to take on too much debt with too many cards and you'll begin to establish an excellent record on your credit reports at all three credit reporting agencies. That information, in turn, is used to calculate your credit score – a number that tells potential lenders how likely you are to repay your debt. Use your cards to improve your credit score and you may be eligible for a better deal on your mortgage and auto insurance.

2. Protect your big purchases. If you buy something that is damaged or defective and you used a credit card, you have the right to withhold payment under the Fair Credit Billing Act. You do need to make a good-faith effort to solve the dispute with the merchant. But if you can't, your credit card company will investigate the problem. If after contacting the merchant you are unable to settle and the card company sides with you, the charge will be added to your bill. Purchases made with debit cards are not covered under the Fair Credit Billing Act.

3. Shop online safer. The Fair Credit Billing Act also covers online purchases, making a credit card the best way to pay online. If you're worried about security, many credit card companies offer a one-time account number for large online purchases that keeps your real account number off the web.

Choose a card with a low interest rate and put your credit card to work for you.

Study of Necessity

- **New/Used Auto Loans** – low rates and competitive terms
- **24/7 Account Access** with eBanking and Bill Payer, so you can access your account and pay your bills even when you're far from home

Plus, our College Student VISA® Card can be converted to a VISA® Classic Card upon completion of college/university coursework and our low rates are not only good for purchases, but also apply to balance transfers and cash advances.

Achieve your financial independence with Securityplus FCU. Contact the Call Center or visit our website, www.securityplusfcu.org, for more details.



The Freshman 15: 15 Ways to Avoid ID Theft on Campus

College students face the same risk of having their identity stolen as anyone else.

On a college campus, you live in close quarters, where people come in and out. There's a lot of freedom, but also a lot of opportunity for someone to steal your personal information.

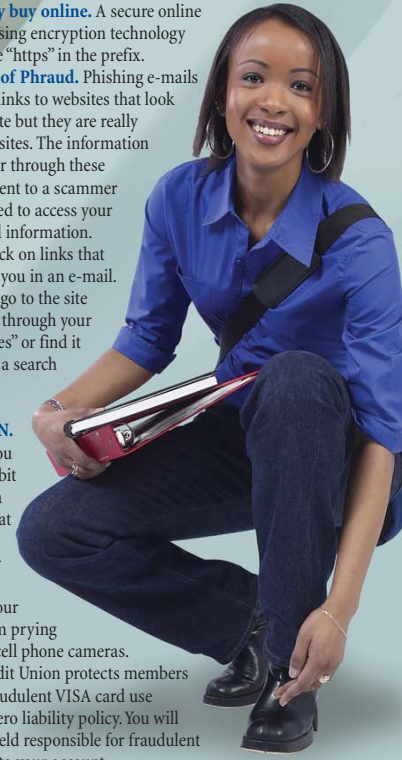
Here are 15 ways to reduce your chances of becoming a victim.

- 1. Guard your mail.** College mail stations aren't 100% secure. One person, or several people, can access mailboxes that contain credit cards and checks. If it's an option, rent a secure box at a postal or mail facility.
- 2. Use a secure mailbox.** Deposit bills or other items that contain personal information in a postal collection box, instead of an unsecured mail bin.
- 3. Junk the junk mail.** The Direct Marketing Association, the trade group for companies who market by mail, requires its members to stop sending mail to anyone on their do-not-send list. While it won't stop all unsolicited mail, you should see a significant decrease within 3 months. Apply through the mail for free by sending your request to: Mail Preference Service, Direct Marketing Association, P.O. Box 643, Carmel, NY 10512.
- 4. Limit your credit or debit cards.** Keep it to one or two. A Securityplus FCU College Student VISA® Card carries an automatic credit line of \$500. And if a credit card isn't an option, consider a Securityplus FCU VISA® Check Card. Check Card accounts contain a "set" amount of money, and once the money is spent, it's gone, so it limits the risk of someone running up debt in your name.
- 5. Find a safe place for valuables.** A person who has your Social Security card, credit card or debit card has resources to your personal identity and your cash. Since you shouldn't carry them with you at all times, keep them in a safe place like a locked drawer.
- 6. Keep financial papers private.** If you have financial papers – bank statements, credit card bills, student loan documents – in your room, keep them out of reach and sight of others. Handle bills and other finance-related items online and have reminder notices sent to your parents to store. Securityplus FCU offers eBanking and Bill Payer services that allow you to electronically access your account and pay your bills 24/7 from wherever you are.
- 7. Act quickly.** When your financial statements come in, scan them for any discrepancies. If you find anything, call the bank or card company immediately to preserve more of your protection rights.
- 8. If your Social Security number is your student ID number, ask if it can be changed.** Carrying your Social Security number on your student ID card puts you at risk for identity theft. While some states have outlawed the use of Social Security numbers for student ID cards, many haven't. Some schools will change your ID number if you ask.
- 9. Request your (Credit) Report card.** If anyone has gotten credit in your name, it will likely show up on your credit report(s). You can receive a free copy of your credit report, upon request, once every 12 months by calling toll-free 1-877-322-8228 or logging on to www.annualcreditreport.com. Talk to your parents about paying for a monitoring service through one of the three credit bureaus. For

about \$80 a year it will alert you any time someone applies for credit in your name.

- 10. Safeguard your computer.** If you have your own computer, use password protection for your files and e-mail. That way if you share, or it gets stolen, you'll have some protection. Select a password that's not obvious; don't use your name, birthday, etc. Instead, try a combination of letters and numbers like the first initials of a favorite book with a couple of numbers included; that way, you'll remember it, but no one else will be able to guess.
- 11. Be cautious with public computers.** If you're using a public computer, in a lab or common area, clear the history and the cookies when you're done. Make sure the browser isn't set up to remember your information.
- 12. Be smart about sharing your personal information on the Internet.** Consider using e-mail addresses and pseudonyms that don't include any part of your real name.
- 13. Securely buy online.** A secure online server using encryption technology will have "https" in the prefix.
- 14. Beware of Phraud.** Phishing e-mails include links to websites that look legitimate but they are really "spool" sites. The information you enter through these sites is sent to a scammer to be used to access your personal information. Don't click on links that come to you in an e-mail. Instead, go to the site yourself through your "Favorites" or find it through a search engine.
- 15. Protect your PIN.** When you use a debit card in a store or at an ATM, use your hand to shield your PIN from prying eyes or cell phone cameras. The Credit Union protects members from fraudulent VISA card use with a zero liability policy. You will not be held responsible for fraudulent charges to your account.

For most students, the threat of identity theft is pretty low on the priority list. Follow these tips and you can reduce your risk.



Junior Achievement Bowl-a



Securityplus FCU participated in the Annual Junior Achievement Bowl-a on May 16, 2007, at the AMF Woodlawn Lanes.

Through fund-raising efforts of credit union staff and donations from the community, Securityplus FCU raised a total of \$1,770.00.

The money collected from this event will help fund quality economic education in-school classes and activities for students throughout Central Maryland.

Junior Achievement is dedicated to teaching children the basics of college and career readiness. Securityplus FCU has been an active supporter of Junior Achievement for several years.

2007 System Conversion

The primary goal of the upcoming conversion of our data processing system is to improve the service we deliver to you. The new, more efficient, system will help us to better meet your financial needs.

We anticipate a smooth conversion. The majority of changes will be implemented in small, manageable scenes. New system enhancements and other conversion information will be included in a conversion packet that you will be mailed in August.

We appreciate your patience through this conversion process and thank you for serving your financial needs for many years to come.

Look for more information on our System Conversion in future editions of *Sharing Times*.