

## HOW TO DISPUTE ITEMS ON A CREDIT REPORT

Due to millions of data records being exchanged between creditors and credit repositories (TransUnion, Experian, Equifax) there is always the possibility of inaccuracies being reported in reference to your personal credit. For this reason it is recommended that a consumer receive a copy of their credit report at least once a year, especially three months prior to making a large purchase, for instance, a mortgage.

Reports can be requested directly from the bureaus by going to each bureau's website or by looking in the yellow pages under "credit." You can also get a direct link by going to <http://www.orcredit.com/consumer.asp>. Equifax provides a three bureau report. There will be a charge associated with this request unless; it is within 60 days of being denied for a loan, you're unemployed and intend to look for a job within 60 days, you're on welfare, your report is inaccurate due to fraud. In the last three instances you are entitled to one free credit report per year. This is in accordance with the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

If inaccuracies are found after reviewing your credit report you may want to dispute those items to have them removed or have them reported correctly. First, you should breakdown the report circling the items in dispute. You will then want to determine which bureaus are reporting the information and whether it is being reported about the borrower, co-borrower or both. Bureau reporting can be determined by looking at the "file" box associated with each disputed tradeline and matching with file variations found on page one. You only want to dispute with the repositories that are reporting the incorrect information. Because the three main bureaus do not share information, not necessarily all will have records of particular accounts. It is not required for creditors to report to all three bureaus or any at all.

One option for getting your information corrected and updated with the bureaus is to have the loan officer, or the individual who pulled your credit report, contact Old Republic Credit Services customer service department and request a "Score Update." This will update your file within approximately three days. Documentation from the creditor will be required.

A consumer may also dispute the information on their own by writing letters to the respective bureaus. Included with the letters should be any documentation from creditors or proof showing the accuracy of the given accounts. While this is not required, it is recommended for making a stronger case. Each bureau will be responsible for contacting creditors to validate information. If the bureau is unable to verify the information currently being reported it is required to remove the item per the Fair Credit Reporting Act. When sending letters be sure to send "return receipt" which will give you a receipt from the post office stating the date your letter was delivered. This is important because the repository has 30 days to reply to your request per the FCRA.

If your request has been denied you have several more options. You have the right to re-dispute. This will not likely change the information in your file, but has been known to help in certain situations. You may also request to have a 100 word statement added to your file which explains the situation or describes the actions you have taken to resolve the issue at hand. This statement should be kept very simple and concise explaining only the facts. Finally, you can request the name and contact information for the company that was responsible for verifying this information so that you can follow up with them directly.

Disputes can also be filed online at each bureau's website, but currently, only TransUnion will accept a dispute online without a reference number from one of their consumer reports. Old Republic or any other credit reporting company cannot supply a bureau reference number. This

can only be received by ordering a report directly from the bureau. Consumers may also try to contact the bureaus by telephone, but a reference number will always be required.

Contact Information:

Experian  
P.O. Box 2002  
Allen, TX 75013  
888-397-3742  
[www.experian.com](http://www.experian.com)

TransUnion  
P.O. Box 1000  
Chester, PA 19022  
800-888-4213  
[www.transunion.com](http://www.transunion.com)

Equifax  
P.O. Box 740256  
Atlanta, GA 30374  
800-216-1102  
[www.equifax.com](http://www.equifax.com)

The following is a sample of a letter to be sent to a bureau. Feel free to use this as a template.

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Date: 01/01/2003  
From: John Doe  
Address: 123 Maple Lane  
Fantasy Island, IL 60750

To: TransUnion/Experian/Equifax  
(attn: complaints dept.)

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to dispute information associated with my credit file which is being reported incorrectly. I have enclosed copies of pages of my credit report which contain disputed tradelines. Each dispute has been circled and numbered and my explanation for each dispute is itemized by number below:

1. This item is inaccurate because it actually belongs to my father. I am requesting that it be deleted from my credit file.....(why are you disputing and what would you like done?)
2. This item was purchased by another company, but is still showing "current" with a balance. Please report with a zero balance with a last active date of.....

I am including copies of documentation which show the accuracy of these requests.

In accordance with the Fair Credit Reporting Act, I understand you will check each item directly with the involved creditors and update all information which can be verified and remove any item which cannot be verified. In doing so I understand that you will respond to my request within 30 days.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,  
John Doe