

# Credit Reports



If you do not pay a debt, such as a mobile phone or credit card debt (or even if it is paid late) the lender may list a **default** on your **credit report**. Having a default on your credit report may make it hard for you to obtain a loan or take out a mobile phone contract.

## What are credit reports?

Credit reports contain details of individuals' financial and personal details. If you have applied for a credit card, loan, mobile phone contract or have had utilities in your name (such as gas or electricity accounts) you are likely to have a credit report.

## What is listed on my credit report?

As well as personal identifying details such as your date of birth and driver's license number, your credit report includes details of your current and past address/es.

**Loan applications** are listed on credit reports. Credit providers may knock you back when you apply for credit if you have a high number of loan applications on your credit report, particularly within a short period of time.

**Defaults** are also listed on credit reports. The credit provider must be a member of the credit reporting agency to list a default on your credit report. Banks, credit unions, finance companies, mobile phone companies and utility companies will generally be members. A credit provider can generally list a default on your credit report:

- if you are 60 days or more behind on when your payment was due; and
- the credit provider has sent a letter to you letting you know about the default and requesting payment.

## How long are defaults listed on my credit report?

- Ordinary defaults are listed for 5 years.
- Serious credit infringements or "clearouts" are listed for 7 years.
- Judgment debts (where a debt matter has gone to court and there is a court judgment against you) are listed for 5 years.
- Bankruptcies are listed for 7 years.

If a default is listed on your credit report and you later pay the debt this will **not** mean that the default is removed. The credit report should be amended to indicate that the default has now been paid, but the default will still mean it is unlikely you will be able to obtain credit while the default is listed.

## How will I know if I have a default on my credit report?

If you are knocked back on your loan application because of a default on your credit report the creditor should tell you that this was the reason you were knocked back. If you have moved address or if for any other reason are worried you may have a default on your credit report that you are unaware of, you can obtain a copy of your credit report to check whether there are any defaults listed on it.

## How do I obtain a copy of my credit report?

You can obtain a copy of your credit report for free. This may take up to 10 working days. If you want to obtain a copy of your credit report more quickly there will be a charge.

The credit reporting agency will require identification details such as:

- your full name
- address (and your previous address)
- your date of birth
- your driver's licence number

**Watch out:** There have been some credit-reporting scams online where fake free credit reports are offered to

scam people into providing personal information including credit card details.

There are just two main credit reporting agencies for Victoria:

- Veda Advantage; and
- Dun and Bradstreet.



#### **Veda Advantage**

Public Access: PO Box 964 North Sydney NSW 2059

Phone: 1300 762 207

[www.mycreditfile.com.au](http://www.mycreditfile.com.au)

#### **Dun & Bradstreet**

Public Access Centre Dun & Bradstreet (Australia) P/L : PO Box 7405 St Kilda Road VIC 3004

Phone: 132 333

[www.dnb.com.au](http://www.dnb.com.au)

It is possible to have a default listed on one credit report that is not listed on the other so you should check both credit reports.

### **What can I do if information on my credit report is incorrect?**

Consumer Action Law Centre provides information about what you can do if you are trying to change your credit report. See their fact sheet "How do I change my credit report?" [www.consumeraction.org.au/fact-sheets/](http://www.consumeraction.org.au/fact-sheets/)

## **Where to go for help:**

#### **Federal Privacy Commissioner**

The Privacy Commissioner regulates credit reporting.

1300 363 992

[www.privacy.gov.au/topics/credit](http://www.privacy.gov.au/topics/credit)

#### **Consumer Action Law Centre**

Consumer Action Law Centre is a specialist community legal centre providing legal advice and assistance around consumer and credit related issues.

Ph: 9629 6300 or 1300 881 020

Web address: [www.consumeraction.org.au](http://www.consumeraction.org.au)

#### **Consumer Affairs Victoria Helpline**

For your nearest financial counsellor and information on credit and debt issues call Consumer Affairs Victoria

Ph: 1300 55 81 81

Web address: [www.consumer.vic.gov.au](http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au)

**MoneyHelp** is a free phone financial counselling service for those who have recently lost a job or had their work hours reduced or who are experiencing mortgage or rental stress .

Ph: 1800 149 689

Web address: [www.moneyhelp.org.au](http://www.moneyhelp.org.au)

Or for legal advice contact us:

#### **YouthLaw**

19 King Street Melbourne

Phone: 9611 2412

Email: [info@youthlaw.asn.au](mailto:info@youthlaw.asn.au)

The funding for this information sheet was provided from the Consumer Credit Fund on the approval of the Minister for Consumer Affairs.

This fact sheet was last updated January 2010.