

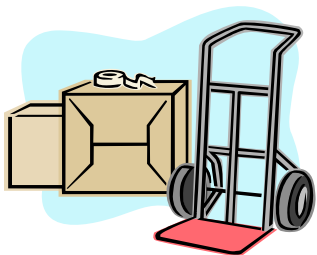


# Consumer Issues

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## Moving Out? Tips for an Organized Move



Whether you are moving down the street or across the country, relocating is stressful. Finding an item once it is packed can be difficult. The following tips can remove the hassle

of finding important items once you reach your new home.

- ❖ **Number your boxes by room.**  
For example, boxes numbered 100–199 are destined for the kitchen while boxes numbered 200–299 are destined for the master bedroom.
- ❖ **Write the room name and number using a large marker on multiple sides of the box.**  
As a way to deter theft, do not write the contents on the box. Instead, type the contents of each box into a document that is saved on your computer.
- ❖ **Create a “Moving List” on your computer.**  
Set up a landscape-style document with at least three columns (box number, room, contents). As you pack, add items to this list. Before your move, print a copy of the list or load it to your PalmPilot®. (Noncomputer users can use a notebook to record the items in individual boxes.)

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- ❖ **Set up your computer early.**  
Once you arrive at your new home, set up your computer. Doing this will help you open your “Moving List” document and use the “find” option for an item you cannot locate in a box or on your printed list. For example, perform a search using the word “toaster” and you’ll find it was packed in box 119.
- ❖ **Label fragile boxes.**  
Boxes containing glass or breakables need to be labeled “Fragile—Glass.” Other boxes containing electronics or computer monitors can be labeled “Aquarium.” This lets your movers know that the box they are handling needs extra care without revealing the true contents of the box.

Source: “The Dollar Stretcher. My Story: The Organized Move.” In *Living Better...For Less*. Retrieved on July 6, 2004, from <http://stretcher.com/stories/04/04may31d.cfm>

Moving List		
Box Number	Room	Contents

## Back-to-School Shopping



Crayons, rulers, scissors, and glue . . . put them together, it's time for school! Fall's approach signals the need to shop for school supplies. This year try a different tactic to

shopping for back to school. Develop a plan using the tips below to get the most from this annual chore.

- Make a list of what is needed by category (clothing, books, equipment for after school activities, etc.). Compare this list to what you already have.
- Make a prioritized list of items needed and develop a budget for them.
- Plan ahead. Watch for store sale flyers, flea market specials, garage sales, and clearance sales.
- Establish a spending plan and timetables for purchases over several weeks.
- Comparison shop with at least three or more sources for best values. Consider not buying all the needed clothing at once. If clothes get even wear, all may need to be replaced at the same time. When purchasing clothes, be sure to check items for strong buttonholes, secure buttons, reinforced stitching, firmly woven or knitted fabric, and basic styles that are timeless. Remember to allow some for growth

in your children's clothing. Spread out purchases over many weeks. Allow some flexibility so you can take advantage of sales and true bargains.

- Avoid using credit cards to spend income not yet earned. Only take as much cash as needed based on your predetermined budget.
- When it comes to trendy school clothes or school supplies, encourage your children to avoid following the crowd. Remind them that many of the hottest trends will fizzle after school starts.
- Consider setting aside money each month of the year for school expenses. If you have several school-age children, this year-long savings strategy could be a lifesaver. .
- Use layaway plans to purchase clothes and supplies whenever it is possible and practical.
- Purchase used textbooks, lab tools, and supplies when possible.
- Use this back-to-school shopping experience as a teachable moment for your children. Build desirable spending habits by involving them in the planning and shopping process.

Sources:

Richard, Paul. (August 2001). *Helpful Tips for Back-to-School Spending from the ICFE in San Diego*. Institute of Consumer Financial Education. Retrieved on July 6, 2004 from [http://www.financial-education-icfe.org/financial\\_news\\_press\\_releases/2001/20010806-hel](http://www.financial-education-icfe.org/financial_news_press_releases/2001/20010806-hel).

*Back-to-School Shopping: Beating the Back-to-School Blues*. (2003) Consumer Credit Counseling Service. Retrieved on July 6, 2004 from <http://www.cccsatl.org/back-to-school-shopping.asp>

## New Brochure on Predatory Lending

Ten federal agencies have collaborated to publish a new brochure alerting consumers to the potential pitfalls of using their home as security for a loan, including a high-cost "predatory" loan. *Putting Your Home on the Loan Line Is Risky Business* warns that borrowing from an unscrupulous lender could result in the loss of your home as well as your money. The brochure also provides tips for getting the best deal and includes information about federal consumer protection laws.

Check out this new brochure online at [www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/index.html](http://www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/index.html). Copies of the brochure are available free of charge from the FDIC's Public Information Center.

## Tech Support Is on the Way!



Have you called technical support in search of help for a computer or electronics problem? Chances are you were asked for several pieces of information that were not readily available. Often when we make the call to tech support, we have to scramble to locate a machine's make, model, and serial number. Sometimes this is the case for different software packages as well.

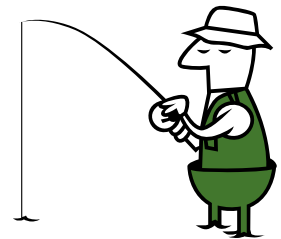
In the future, use the form below to avoid the last minute search for information. When you purchase new electronic items or software packages, while completing the warranty information, take an extra moment to record important information on the form below and file it for reference. This extra effort will save you time in the future and could come in handy if you are the victim of a robbery, fire, or other events that could cause property loss or damage.

Important Electronics Information					
Item	Make	Model	Serial Number	Date Purchased	Other Notes

## Don't Take the Bait! Beware of E-mail Scams

The FDIC continues to warn consumers about fake Web sites and e-mails that attempt to trick them into divulging valuable personal information such as bank account and credit card numbers, Social Security numbers, passwords, and personal identification numbers (PINs).

In the typical scam, called "phishing" schemes, consumers receive an e-mail purportedly from a company or financial institution they do business with or from a government agency. The thieves ask for personal information that can be used to make unauthorized withdrawals from your bank account, pay for online purchases using your credit card, or even sell your personal information to other thieves. Even the FDIC's name has been used fraudulently in these scams.



For more information about how to protect against these types of frauds, see "When Internet Scam Artists Go 'Phishing,' Don't Take the Bait," in the winter 2003/2004 issue of the FDIC Consumer News at [www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/news/cnwin0304/phishing.html](http://www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/news/cnwin0304/phishing.html).

## Credit Cards and Universal Default

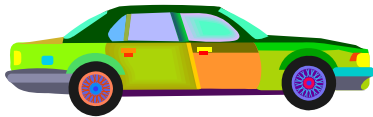


Does your credit card have a “universal default” provision? If you do not know, then read the fine print on your annual disclosure statement that describes the conditions of your credit card agreement. Universal default may become effective after cardholders miss a single payment by the due date with **any** creditor and then is considered in default (delinquent) with **all** creditors. Lenders then have the right to increase your interest rate without any warning or explanation! Creditors discover the late payment or other negative information in your credit file when conducting routine reviews (monthly, quarterly or yearly) of your credit file.

### Ways to Protect Yourself

- Always read the fine print before entering into any legally binding agreement and review the annual disclosure statement received with credit cards. Look specifically for the universal default clause. As needed, transfer balances to cards without the universal default clause.
- Pay bills when they arrive as opposed to when they are due to ensure sufficient posting time.
- Contact the creditor for a more convenient due date if needed. That is, arrange to have due dates coincide with your pay dates.
- Pay your bills electronically whenever possible to ensure immediate posting.

Is universal default a feature of your credit card agreement? To find out, check your files for a copy of the most recent annual disclosure statement or inquire with your creditors today. Do not delay. Procrastination could cause you to pay more.



## Donating Cars to Charity

If you are buying a new car and the old one still have some useful life to it, consider donating it to a local charity. In addition to providing wheels to someone in need, you could get a tax deduction if you itemize deductions on Schedule Form 1040. To learn more about the recordkeeping and filing requirements for donated cars, review IRS publication 4303—A Donor’s Guide to Car Donations on the web (<http://www.irs.gov>).

## The Federal Consumer Information Center

The federal government is a source of information for many consumer topics and most of it is free. Check out the possibilities at <http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov>.

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<http://consumerissues.cas.psu.edu/newsletter.html>

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