



MAKE SURE YOUR FREE CREDIT REPORT IS THE REAL THING
There is Only One Authorized Source for Free Credit Reports

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MADISON -- We have all seen the ads and heard the catchy jingles advertising free credit reports. Checking your credit report regularly is a good way to help prevent identity theft. Getting your credit report free is even better. Some businesses claim to offer free credit reports, but there is generally a catch, like paying for credit monitoring.

There is only one authorized source for a free credit report under federal law: www.annualcreditreport.com or 877-322-8228.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has new rules aimed at the misleading ads that hook consumers into believing that they can get a free credit report with no strings attached.

The new rules currently apply to web sites only, but similar wording for radio and television ads will go into effect on September 1, 2010.

Under the rules for web sites:

- Business sites must prominently state at the top of each page that: "THIS NOTICE IS REQUIRED BY LAW. Read more at ftc.gov. You have the right to a free credit report from AnnualCreditReport.com or 877-322-8228, the ONLY authorized source under federal law."
- The website must provide a clickable button that says, "Take me to the authorized source."
- Businesses cannot require consumers to set up an account or agree to terms and conditions to receive a free credit report.
- Experian, Equifax, and TransUnion, the three major credit reporting agencies required to provide free credit reports under federal law, may not advertise for other goods or services until consumer has finished the process for his or her free report.

The new rules do not address web sites that offer free credit scores.

If you have questions about the new rules or have difficulty getting your free credit report, the Wisconsin Office of Privacy Protection can help.

Wisconsin Office of Privacy Protection
DATCPWisconsinPrivacy@wisconsin.gov
Toll-free Hotline – 1-800-422-7128
Website: privacy.wi.gov

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