What if?

If your credit report played a role in a company's decision to deny you insurance coverage, the company must inform you and supply the name of the credit reporting agency that provided the information. This is required by the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act.

If you've been denied insurance, appeal. Florida requires insurance companies to identify specific reasons for denial. Ask the insurance company to put the reasons for denial in writing. Then contact the credit reporting agency that supplied the report and request an investigation. By law, credit reporting agencies must investigate and respond to your request within 30 days. If you believe that you have been denied insurance in error, contact the Division of Consumer Services' Insurance Consumer Helpline for assistance:

**1-877-MY-FL-CFO
(1-877-693-5236)**

For more information:

Department of Financial Services
www.MyFloridaCFO.com/Division/Consumers/

The Florida Department of Financial Services' Division of Consumer Services offers a variety of information and resources to consumers on numerous financial and insurance-related topics.

Federal Trade Commission
www.ftc.gov

The Federal Trade Commission helps protect consumers from unfair business practices and provides information on ways to protect your identity; budget and save money; and purchase a home.
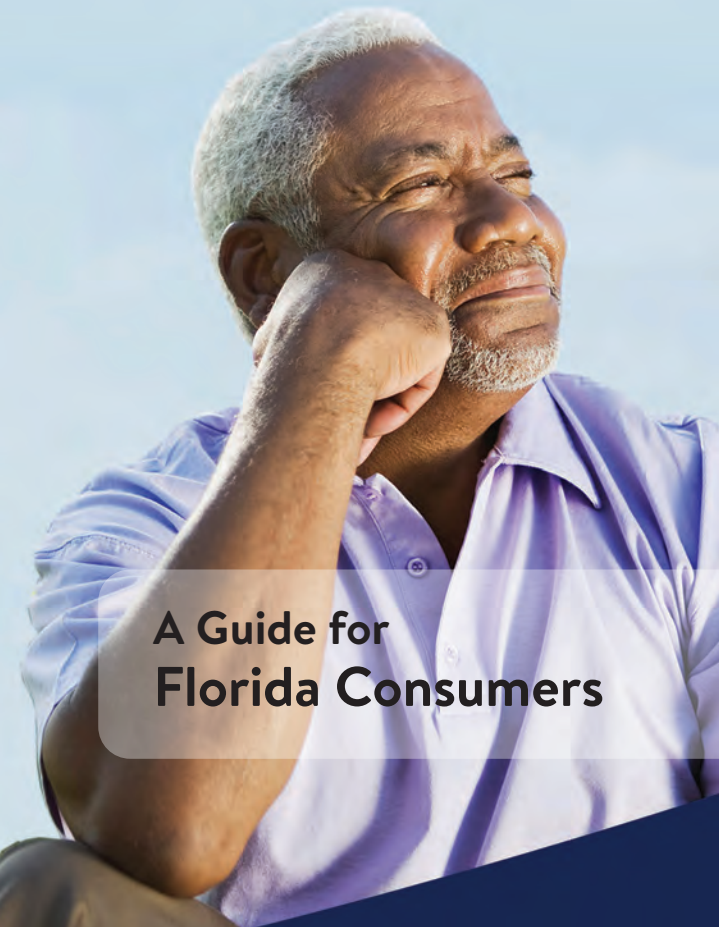
National Foundation for Credit Counseling
www.nfcc.org

The National Foundation for Credit Counseling certifies counselors that can assist you in offering potential solutions to your current financial problems.

Revised June 2021

Credit, Insurance and You

How a good credit score can save you money!

A Guide for Florida Consumers

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
Jimmy Patronis
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

A good credit score saves you money

As a consumer, you probably understand that paying bills on time contributes to a good credit score.

But you might be surprised to learn that a good or bad credit score also helps determine the rates you'll pay for insurance or applying for a credit card.

Your credit score is determined by credit reporting companies that collect and evaluate financial information obtained from banks, department stores, installment loan companies and other creditors.

Lenders use your credit score to determine whether you qualify for a particular credit card, loan or service. For example, when an insurance company reviews your policy application, your credit history can be included in the application to determine approval and the rate of the policy.

While this is not the only criteria used to determine your policy rates, it is a factor when rates are calculated. Therefore, a higher credit score can help you get a lower rate on an insurance policy.

There are ways to improve your credit score. Even if you do have a good credit score, it is important to be aware of the information on your credit report by accessing a free copy of your report.

Free credit reports once a year

The Federal Fair Credit Reporting Act requires the three nationwide consumer credit reporting companies - Equifax, Experian and TransUnion - to provide you with a free copy of your credit report once a year. However, to obtain your actual credit score, you may have to pay a small fee. Your credit card company may provide your credit score for free. Keep in mind that the score might only be from one credit reporting company.

You may obtain your free credit report by:

- Calling 1-877-322-8228
- Accessing the only federally-authorized source for free online credit reports at www.annualcreditreport.com
- Mailing your completed Annual Credit Report Request Form (available at www.annualcreditreport.com) to:

    Annual Credit Report
    Request Service
    P.O. Box 105283
    Atlanta, GA 30348-5283

Beware of other websites or businesses that claim to offer free reports, as they may be fraudulent or require you to purchase other products or services to receive a free report.

Tips to improve your insurance premiums

Every day, consumers with good credit, no prior insurance losses and good driving records are penalized due to errors in their credit report. It is in your best interest to ensure your credit report is complete and accurate.

Use the following tips to ensure the information on your credit report is correct:

- Pay your bills on time. Late payments appear on your credit report for seven years.
- Monitor your credit report at least once a year by using www.annualcreditreport.com.
- Remove negative information from your report whenever possible by contacting the credit reporting company, in writing, directly.
- Dispute inaccurate information promptly by contacting the credit reporting company, in writing, about the information that is inaccurate.

- Include copies of documents that support your position.
- Remove your name from credit reporting agency lists that are sold to lenders and insurance companies for junk marketing. If you do not want to receive offers of credit or insurance, you can opt out of receiving this mail for five years or opt out of receiving this mail permanently.

    - **To opt out for five years**: Call toll-free 1-888-567-8688 or visit www.optoutprescreen.com.

    - **To opt out permanently:** You may begin the permanent opt-out process online at www.optoutprescreen.com. To complete your request, you must return the signed Permanent Opt-Out Election form, which will be provided after you begin your request online.

- Protect yourself from credit card fraud or identify theft by carefully checking your credit report, accounts and other documents that contain your personal information.

Tips to improve your credit score

- Keep your oldest credit card. Lenders like to see that you have built your credit over time.
- Actively pay off your credit card balances over time to keep them low or pay off your credit card balance at one time, if possible.
- Do not spend more than you are able to repay.
- Don't apply for a lot of credit over a short period of time.