

# YOUR MONEY

Helpful Hints From The Federal Reserve Board

## Getting The Most From Your Credit Cards

(NAPSA)—Credit cards can help to make life more convenient for consumers in a number of ways. However, many find that managing their credit cards efficiently can be a real challenge.

To help, here are a few tips from the Federal Reserve Board. They're designed to help you get the most from your credit cards:

- **Pay on time.** Paying your credit card account on time helps you avoid late fees as well as penalty interest rates applied to your account, and helps you maintain a good credit record.

- **Know the date your payment is due.** If your bill is due at an inconvenient time of the month, contact your credit card company to see if it will change your billing cycle to fit your cash flow.

- **Stay below your credit limit.** If you go over your credit limit on your card, your card issuer could charge a fee and increase your interest rate to a higher penalty rate. To avoid this, keep a record of your spending or check your balance online.

- **Avoid unnecessary fees.** Credit card companies not only charge late payment and over-the-limit fees, but also charge fees for cash advances, transferring balances and having a payment returned. Some even charge a fee when you pay your bill by phone.

Pay attention to the transactions that trigger these fees. Read your credit card agreement to learn more about the fees that your credit card company charges.

- **Pay more than the minimum payment.** If you can't pay your balance in full each month,



**If your bill is due at an inconvenient time of the month, contact your credit card company to see if it will change your billing cycle.**

try to pay as much of the total as you can. Over time, you'll pay less in interest charges—money that you will be able to spend on other things—and you'll pay off your balance sooner.

- **Watch for changes in the terms of your account.** Credit card companies can change the terms and conditions of your account. They will send you notices 45 days in advance, telling you about changes in fees, interest rates, billing and other features. By reading these “change in terms” notices, you can decide whether you want to change the way you use the card. For example, if cash advance fees increase on one card, you may decide to use a different card for cash advances. Read your bill carefully and take note of any changes.

For more information on this and other topics of interest to consumers, visit the Federal Reserve Web site at [www.federalreserve.gov](http://www.federalreserve.gov).