

## Deal With Debt Collectors Head On

While many people deal with their debt collectors by avoiding their mailbox and screening their calls, there are some definite benefits to dealing with your creditors in a more proactive way. If you can deal with them head on, you may be able to save yourself money and unneeded stress.

The best way to deal with debt collectors is to educate yourself. It is important to know what debt collectors can and can't do and how you are protected as a consumer.

First of all, if you're having trouble paying your creditors, go to them and try to negotiate a more reasonable deal in the short or long term. They want their money and are likely to try and help a proactive customer. If you find your creditor is unwilling to compromise, there are some other routes you can take, such as envelope budgeting or debt consolidation to try and get your head above water.

If your creditor begins to harass you for your unpaid debts, there are some things that you should know to protect yourself.

While many creditors follow the stringent guidelines set out by debt collection laws, others will employ sneaky and illegal tactics to get their money. These creditors will play upon your fear and ignorance to get their money through abusive and harassing collection measures. That's why you need to know your rights as a credit consumer.

You can learn about the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act at the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act Web site.

The Act is a statute of the Consumer Credit Protection Act and it exists to protect you from abusive practices relating to debt collection and to provide you and other consumers with a way to protest or dispute different issues. The Act also defines the way in which debt collectors may do business, the rights of consumers and the penalties of violating the Act.

To protect yourself, review the following information regarding what debt collectors may not do when attempting to collect a debt (this behavior is deemed as either abusive or deceptive):

- Telephoning you before 8 a.m. or after 9 p.m.
- Contacting you after receiving written notice that you wish no further contact or refuse to pay the amount (Note: the collector may contact you to indicate collection efforts are being terminated or for litigation purposes)
- Contacting you at work, especially if you have specifically requested that they do not
- Misrepresenting themselves to gain access to you
- Misrepresenting the debt
- Publishing your name or address on a bad debt list
- Threatening you with arrest or legal action
- Swearing at you or using abusive language
- Discussing the nature of your debt with others
- Recording false information in a credit report or threatening to do so

If you feel like you've been mistreated by a creditor visit the Federal Trade Commission Web site to file a complaint.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

### About the Author

© 2006, Kathy Burns-Millyard. For Additional Information, Tips and Advice about dealing with debt collectors, please see "Dealing with Debt Collectors" at <http://www.financialtrap.com/08-2006/dealing-with-debt-collectors/>, or get fast debt help at <http://www.MendMyDebt.com>