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Back Cover

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Front Cover

USING YOUR GIFT CARD

Know the Differences between Store and General Purpose Gift Cards

| | Store Gift Card | General Purpose Gift Card* |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Acceptance | One store chain | Most stores |
| Monthly Fees (after 6-12 months) | None | \$0 to \$4.95 |
| Split Payments | Yes | Sometimes |

*Sold by companies like American Express, MasterCard and Visa, and by malls.

Try to Spend the Entire Balance within 6 Months

- You will be more likely to use all the card's value.
- You will avoid monthly fees on some general purpose gift cards.
- You will reduce the chances of losing the store gift card's value because of store bankruptcy.

Keep Track of Your Balance

- Some gift card issuers provide information online about your card balance and some stores can inform you of the balance upon request.

Use Your Gift Card at Stores that Accept Split Payments

- A split payment is making a purchase using more than one payment method, like a gift card and cash.
- Most large chain stores accept split payments, but some stores will not.
- To avoid problems, tell the cashier up-front when you want to make a split payment.

If Concerns or Problems Arise

- First contact the store or financial institution that issued the card.
- If unsuccessful, consider contacting:

| | |
|---|---|
| Federal Trade Commission | 1-877-FTC-HELP |
| State Attorney General | naag.org |
| Comptroller of the Currency's Consumer Assistance Group | 1-800-613-6743 customer.assistance@occ.treas.gov |

Recent federal law, effective August 2010, establishes gift card protections that require cards to be active for at least 5 years and prohibit fees being charged if gift cards are used within the past 12 months.

Place Gift Card and Packaging Here



Consumer Federation of America



National Association of Consumer Agency Administrators

This brochure was prepared by the Consumer Federation of America (consumerfed.org) and the National Association of Consumer Agency Administrators (naaca.net) with assistance from American Express (americanexpress.com/gift/).

PURCHASING A GIFT CARD

Differences between Store and General Purpose Gift Cards

| | Store Gift Card | General Purpose Gift Card* |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Acceptance | One store chain | Most stores |
| Purchase Price | None | \$3.95 to \$6.95 |
| Monthly Fees (after 6-12 months) | None | \$0 to \$4.95 |
| Split Payments | Yes | Sometimes |

*Sold by companies like American Express, MasterCard and Visa, and by malls.

Fees and Expiration Date

- Consider purchasing only cards that clearly disclose information about the initial cost, monthly fees, and expiration date.
- For general purpose gift cards, expiration dates indicate when the user will need to have the gift card reissued or receive a refund, sometimes at a fee.

If Concerns or Problems Arise

- First contact the store or financial institution that issued the card.
- If unsuccessful, consider contacting:

| | |
|---|---|
| Federal Trade Commission | 1-877-FTC-HELP |
| State Attorney General | naag.org |
| Comptroller of the Currency's Consumer Assistance Group | 1-800-613-6743 customer.assistance@occ.treas.gov |

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