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8 Reasons Why Your Credit Card Was Declined

by Bill Hardekopf

And what you can do to avoid them

A declined credit card can happen to anyone, no matter your income level, credit score or credit limit.

Here are eight common reasons your card may be declined and some tips on how you can avoid that embarrassment.

- 1) You have exceeded your credit limit. This means you have reached the maximum amount your credit card company will allow you to borrow. If you are unsure of how much money you have left to spend, check the "available balance" online or call the number on the back of your card. You can also set up text alerts that notify you when you are close to reaching your credit limit.
- 2) You have missed a card payment. If you are behind on your payments, your issuer will eventually stop accepting new purchases.
- 3) You have made a suspicious charge. This can happen if you shop in an unusual place, have an high number of transactions in one day, make a very large purchase, or try to withdraw a lot of money from an ATM. Credit card companies may flag any charges they consider "out of the ordinary," forcing you to call them to verify the transactions.
- 4) Your card's security has been threatened. In today's world, credit card companies are extremely cautious of identity theft, so they may freeze your account if your card may have been exposed to a potential problem. This may be the result of shopping from a web page that is not a trusted online site or going to an ATM pinned as a credit card skimming location.
- 5) You have a hold on your account. This could come from a hotel, rental car company, or gas station. The hold ensures that the company gets the money they need from your use of their services. If you recently stayed in a hotel or rented a car, the company may not have yet released the excess funds.
- 6) You are trying to make an international purchase or an online purchase from a foreign company. This could create an alert and possibly freeze your card. Avoid this by calling your bank and informing them about your international trip or purchase.
- 7) The information that you entered is not valid. Your card may be declined if you incorrectly typed your credit card number, expiration date, or security code more than once or entered an incorrect billing address.
- 8) Your card will be declined if it is expired. Check the date on the front of the card and see if it is still usable. If not, you will need to request a new card.