

Press Releases

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OTS 04-44 - Federal Bank, Thrift, and Credit Union Agencies Provide Consumer Information on Avoiding Overdraft and Bounced-Check Fees

Office of Thrift Supervision

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For further information

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Joint Release

**Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
National Credit Union Administration
Office of the Comptroller of the Currency
Office of Thrift Supervision**

Federal Bank, Thrift, and Credit Union Regulatory Agencies Provide Consumer Information on Avoiding Overdraft and Bounced-Check Fees

Federal Bank, Thrift, and Credit Union Regulatory Agencies Provide Consumer Information on Avoiding Overdraft and Bounced-Check Fees

The federal bank, thrift, and credit union regulatory agencies today announced the publication of a new consumer resource, *Protecting Yourself from Overdraft and Bounced-Check Fees*.

The brochure's key message to consumers is that the best way to avoid overdraft and bounced-check fees is to manage accounts wisely. That means keeping an up-to-date check register, recording all electronic transactions and automatic bill payments, and monitoring account balances carefully.

Many banks, savings and loans, and credit unions offer "courtesy overdraft protection" or "bounce coverage" plans so checks do not bounce and ATM, debit card, and other electronic or automatic transactions go through. But most financial institutions charge a flat fee (often \$20 to \$30) for each item they cover. Even if a financial institution has a bounce-coverage plan, there is no guarantee an overdraft will be covered.

The federal financial regulatory agencies want consumers to know that careful account management is the lowest-cost way to avoid overdraft and returned-check fees and protect your hard-earned money. If overdraft protection is needed every now and then, consumers should talk with their financial institution or a financial adviser about what choices and

services are right for them. Financial institutions may provide other ways of covering overdrafts that may be less expensive. For example, consumers may be able to link a savings or other account to automatically transfer funds into their checking account. Consumers also may be able to establish an overdraft line of credit or link a checking account to a credit card.

The interagency information is available on each agency's web site. A PDF (Portable Document Format) version is provided on the web site so that consumer groups, financial institutions, agencies, and other organizations can download and print copies for distribution to their clients and customers. It includes a space on the back panel for organizations to provide their own contact information.

Single copies of the brochure are available free of charge from Publications, Mail Stop 127,

Federal Reserve Board, 20th and C Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20551; 202-452-3245.

Overdraft and Bounced-Check Fees Brochure - <http://www.occ.gov/static/news-issuances/ots/press-releases/ots-pr-2004-44a.pdf>

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The Office of Thrift Supervision, an office of the Department of the Treasury, regulates and supervises the nation's thrift industry. OTS's mission is to ensure the safety and soundness of, and compliance with consumer protection laws by, thrift institutions, and to support their role as home mortgage lenders and providers of other community credit and financial services. OTS also oversees the activities and operations of thrift holding companies that own or control thrift institutions. Copies of OTS news releases and other documents are available at the OTS web page at www.ots.treas.gov.