

# CONSUMER BILL OF RIGHTS

*In all that we do, we strive to treat consumers with respect and integrity. We are committed to engaging in dialogue that is respectful and constructive, creating solutions for our consumers that resolve their obligations, and ensuring that those who work on our behalf adhere to these same standards. We operate in compliance with the laws that regulate our industry, and we hope to play an important and productive role in people's lives.*

## **Article 1: Consumer Treatment**

*We Treat Consumers With Dignity and Respect, in a Manner that Promotes Settlement and Seeks to Maximize Consumer Comprehension of their Account Rights and Responsibilities*

### *Communications*

- In our written correspondence with consumers, we provide clear communications, straightforward disclosures, and robust account information to maximize consumer comprehension and recognition of their account.

### *Our Employees*

- Our employees who interact with consumers are trained on, and expected to comply with, applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations concerning fair and ethical collection practices. Employees' conduct in this regard is monitored for compliance.
- When interacting with consumers, our employees listen and work hard to understand the consumers' needs.
- If we make a mistake, we devote time, attention, and effort to resolve it promptly and appropriately. We work hard to learn from our mistakes, and to use what we've learned to improve our consumers' overall experience when interacting with us.
- When interacting with consumers, our employees engage in dialogue that is respectful, honorable and constructive.

### *Payments*

- We offer discounts and payment plans to consumers in an effort to establish a mutually beneficial resolution that the consumer can afford.
- Our employees strive to develop and present innovative payment options that allow for the effective repayment of the obligation and accommodate the consumer's financial situation. Payment options are discussed with the consumer in plain and simple language.

- Any payment arrangement agreed to between a consumer and our company over the telephone are confirmed in a letter and promptly mailed to the consumer's address.

## **Article 2: Hardship**

*Consumers Who Are Servicemembers, Victims of Natural Disasters, or Who Are Experiencing Medical Issues, Job Loss, or Other Hardships*

- We actively seek to identify active duty servicemembers and stop collections from those servicemembers.
- We suspend collection activities when a consumer demonstrates that he or she is experiencing significant financial hardship due to medical issues.
- We suspend collection activities when a consumer is a direct victim of a natural or other catastrophic disaster.
- We cease collection activities when we receive documentation indicating that the consumer's only source of income is from exempt sources, such as Social Security or Supplemental Security Income benefits, and that the consumer has access to no other assets. We work with and are sensitive to consumers who encounter unforeseen circumstances, such as job loss.

## **Article 3: Complaints and Disputes**

*We Work Hard to Investigate and Respond to Consumers in a Timely and Accurate Manner*

- When reporting to credit reporting agencies, we provide timely and accurate updates and conduct a reasonable investigation of any disputes based on the information provided. When information is found to be incorrect or outdated, we instruct the agencies to correct or delete the information.
- We provide our consumers with more time than the federal legal requirement to obtain validation of their obligation.
- We cease collection activities when a consumer's account is proven to be the result of identity theft, and instruct credit reporting agencies to delete any references we have reported for the account from the consumer's credit reports.

## **Article 4: Collection Practices**

*General Practices*

- We will only collect on accounts for which we are the legitimate, rightful owner.
- We provide our consumers with a grace period before commencing credit reporting of debt. We continue to refrain from credit reporting with payment activity.
- We provide disclosures to consumers if their debt is time-barred that we will not sue them for it.

- We maintain a training program for newly hired collection representatives that includes passing a comprehensive examination, as well as ongoing training and recertification each year, that covers state and federal laws and interpersonal skills.
- We maintain all necessary permits, licenses or other authorizations required to purchase and service consumer receivables and make efforts to ensure that third parties acting on our behalf also have appropriate authorizations.

#### *How We Communicate*

- At the outset of collection activity, we send a debt validation notice informing the consumer that their account has been purchased, identifying the creditor that held the debt at default, clearly stating the balance owed, and giving the consumer an opportunity to both request further information and resolve the debt.
- Before sending the debt validation notice, we use reasonable efforts to verify the consumer's current address.
- All collection letters we mail to a consumer identify the creditor that held the debt at default, the creditor's account number, and the current balance owed, along with other identifying information, as appropriate.
- If any debt validation notice to a consumer is returned, we disable that address, use reasonable efforts to verify the consumer's current address, and, if found, send another validation letter to the new address.
- To protect the privacy of the consumer, we do not systematically leave unsolicited messages on a consumer's voice mail.

#### *Litigation*

- Prior to pursuing a collection strategy that may include litigation, we attempt to contact the consumer to let them know that the next step in the collection process will be their referral to a law firm.
- We engage law firms that litigate in good faith and treat consumers with respect.
- Prior to signing affidavits, our authorized representatives read, understand, and fully verify document contents as appropriate to ensure accuracy. All notarized documents are signed in the presence of a certified notary who is acknowledging the signature.
- Prior to pursuing litigation, our attorneys and law firms confirm that the applicable statute of limitations on the debt has not expired.
- We do not pursue litigation or otherwise collect on accounts where we are not the rightful owner, and we require our attorneys and law firms to provide proof of such ownership when requested by a court.
- We instruct our law firms to engage process servers who are reputable, licensed, in good standing with applicable regulatory agencies and trade associations, and who both conform to all legal requirements concerning the service of process, and employ systematic checks to validate effective service (e.g., the appropriate use of technology, digital pictures, compliance audits, etc.).

- We instruct our law firms to include, where permitted by court rules, the name of the creditor that held the debt at default, reference to the creditor's account number, and other information to help the consumer identify the origin of the debt.
- We instruct our law firms to never ask courts to issue bench warrants or other forms of body attachment that forcibly compel a consumer's appearance in court, except in those rare instances when the court independently determines to enforce its direct order after we obtain a judgment.

#### **Article 5: Privacy and Security**

##### *We Employ Robust Processes to Protect the Security and Confidentiality of our Consumers' Information*

- When we receive official confirmation of a bankruptcy proceeding for a particular account, we stop collection efforts unless the case is dismissed.
- We take all reasonable steps necessary to protect the security of confidential consumer information, including Social Security Numbers, defend against anticipated threats, and prevent unauthorized use of or disclosure to third parties of that information.
- We maintain records documenting the collection activities undertaken on our accounts and maintain those records for a reasonable period of time.
- We conduct background checks as part of our hiring process.
- We maintain a dedicated quality control effort under the oversight of our Board of Directors' Consumer Experience and Compliance Committee. Our quality control effort includes measures such as peer reviews, in-person monitoring, observation of collection system entries, and call monitoring and recording, both to ensure proper monitoring of collection practices and procedures and to identify deficiencies.
- We do not resell accounts to third parties in the ordinary course of our business. In the future, if we have an occasional instance when we do resell accounts, we will only do so when we can provide the purchaser with documentation evidencing the amount owed on the account and clear title of ownership.

*The use of the words "we," "us," or "our" is meant to apply to Encore Capital Group, Inc., Midland Credit Management, Inc., our affiliated corporate entities, which are involved in the collection of U.S. defaulted receivables, and their employees, as required by the context. We will also strive to ensure that our third party service providers, agents, and attorneys adhere to these, or similar, principles when representing us. Please understand that Midland Credit Management is a debt collector. This is an attempt to collect a debt. Any information obtained will be used for that purpose.*