



Telecommunications
Industry
Ombudsman

TIO Good Industry Practice Guide for Credit Management

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About this guide

This guide sets out our expectations of providers where consumers complain about credit management. This guide outlines what we think is good industry practice for how providers approach complaints about credit management.

Good industry practice is different to minimum legal obligations for providers. These obligations are set out in:

- [Telecommunications \(Consumer Complaints Handling\) Industry Standard 2018](#)
- [Sales Practices and Credit and Debt Management Industry Guidance Note](#)
- [Telecommunications Act 1997](#)
- [The Australian Consumer Law](#)
- [Privacy \(Credit Reporting\) Code 2025](#).

We expect consumers to work with providers in finding ways to resolve their complaints.

The examples in this guide are not exhaustive. We always consider the individual circumstances of each complaint when deciding on a fair and reasonable resolution.

You can see our Fairness Framework [here](#).

Examples of Good Industry Practice for Credit Management

We recognise good industry practice as providers trying to prevent credit defaults and treating consumers in a fair way. This may include:

1. Assessing consumers' ability to pay

1.1 We expect providers to responsibly assess new and existing consumers' ability to pay for services and goods by using:

- A range of affordability indicators that show consumers' ability to make regular, ongoing payments for services and goods (such as age, income, general expenses)
- External credit checks.

2. Early engagement

2.1 We expect providers to engage early with consumers to prevent credit defaults and bad credit scores when they:

- Miss payments
- Make partial payments
- Pay late
- Modify payment plans
- Ask for extensions
- Ask to change plans
- Have declined payments by their banks.

2.2 We expect providers to proactively share information with new or existing consumers about:

- Credit assessment processes
- Credit reporting processes.

3. Financial hardship

3.1 We expect providers to proactively engage consumers in plans for financial hardship when they:

- Miss payments

- Make partial payments
- Pay late
- Modify payment plans
- Ask for extensions
- Ask to change plans
- Have declined payments by their banks.

3.2 We expect providers to only proceed to credit management if they have:

- Given consumers 10 working days' notice of any action resulting from credit management, such as the suspension or disconnection of services, especially where consumers may lose their phone numbers
- Actively considered consumers' personal circumstances and how the suspension or disconnection of a service may impact them.

3.3 When consumers say they are in financial hardship, we expect providers to not:

- Report consumers to credit reporting bodies
- Default list consumers.

4. Privacy breaches

4.1 Where consumers claim breaches of privacy that result in unauthorised disclosure of personal information, we expect providers to:

- Suspend all credit action
- Not report consumers to credit reporting bodies
- Not default list consumers.

4.2 Where providers find breaches of privacy that result in unauthorised disclosure of personal information, we expect them to immediately:

- Tell credit reporting bodies
- Recall debts from debt collection agencies.

4.3 Where consumers dispute bills that may lead to credit action, we expect providers to not:

- Only suspend credit action on the disputed amounts.

5. Fraud

5.1 Where consumers and/or providers suspect fraud, we expect providers to:

- Have processes in place to screen and stop default listings
- Stop any credit action on disputed amounts
- Not default list consumers while complaints are in progress.

5.2 Where investigation shows third-party fraud, we expect providers to immediately:

- Correct and/or remove default listings from credit reporting bodies
- Recall debts from debt collection agencies.

6. Default listing as a last resort

6.1 Where providers have exhausted all good industry practice and default list consumers as a last resort, we expect providers to:

- Ensure consumers are not disputing bills before starting the default-listing process
- Give consumers clear and accurate warnings on bills
- Give consumers enough notice of their intention to default list
- List defaults in a timely way to limit disadvantage for consumers.

7. Domestic and family violence

For good industry practice in complaints involving Domestic and Family Violence and Credit Management, please see the [TIO Good Industry Practice Guide for Domestic and Family Violence](#).

References

For more information, please see our:

- [Good Industry Practice Guides](#)
- [Guidance Documents](#)
- [Terms of Reference](#)