

Balancing Do's and Don'ts

Do...

- Record every check, ATM transaction, check card transaction, online bill payment and deposit.
- Balance your account every time you make a deposit, write a check, use the ATM, make a debit card purchase, schedule a bill pay or incur a fee.
- Review your accounts online using online or mobile banking services.
- Balance your checking account as soon as you receive your monthly statement.
- Keep your PIN (Personal Identification Number) and online banking password safe. If you give them to someone else, it's like opening the door to your finances.
- If your monthly statement is mailed rather than viewing it online, contact your financial institution if it is late. Notify your financial institution if you've moved or changed names.
- Carefully review your monthly account statements. If you notice an error, call your financial institution to correct the mistake.
- Sign up for account alerts through your financial institution. These automatic text messages or email alerts will notify you of a low or negative balance.
- Review your account opening terms and conditions to understand the bank's funds availability policy, pricing, contact information, etc.

Don't...

- Don't spend or authorize more than the available balance in your account. Your debit card transaction may be declined, your check may be returned, and you may generate "overdraft" or "insufficient funds" fees. Additionally, a merchant or landlord may charge you additional fees or late payment penalties.
- Don't date a check ahead of the day you wrote it. This is called "post-dating." Even though the date is a future date, the individual or company that you gave it to can go ahead and deposit it. If you don't have enough funds in your account, it may result in an overdraft and you may be charged fees.
- Don't endorse a check until you are ready to deposit it. Endorsing the check means that you sign your name on the back of a check that is made payable to you. Once you have endorsed the check, you can deposit it in your account or cash it.
- Don't place your debit card near a magnetized area. Doing this can ruin the magnetic strip, which means your card will need to be replaced.
- Don't forget that when you use your debit card, the funds owed to the merchant are withheld almost immediately out of your checking account's available funds.
- Don't click on links or respond to emails requesting your personal information. This is called "phishing" and it occurs when criminals create fictitious emails that seem to be from trusted companies. In general, legitimate companies will never request sensitive information from you such as your passwords, PIN, Social Security number, or account numbers via email.