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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**

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For immediate release

October 14, 2004

**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.

A link to a PDF (Portable Document Format) version of the brochure is provided at the bottom of the release 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.

Attachment: Protecting Yourself from Overdraft and Bounced-Check Fees - PDF 2.9m  
(PDF Help)

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