



### **Department of Regulatory Agencies**



### **Consumer Protection Is Our Mission**

#### http://www.dora.state.co.us

303-894-7855 1-800-886-7675 (Toll Free) TDD Users—711

Bill Ritter, Jr., Governor D. Rico Munn, Executive Director



Calendar 2008

### **Depend on DORA**— For Consumer Protection and Professional Service





Department of Regulatory Agencies

### **Consumer Protection Is Our Mission**

http://www.dora.state.co.us



At the Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA), we ensure that Colorado's economy will thrive through a regulatory framework that protects Colorado's consumers, while fostering fair and rigorous standards for professionals and businesses.

DORA is dedicated to preserving the integrity of the marketplace and is committed to promoting a fair and competitive business environment in Colorado. That makes sense for consumers, and consumer protection is our mission.

With Colorado citizens in mind, the qualified professionals at DORA work to:

- Communicate consumer rights, and professional and business responsibilities
- Consistently and fairly apply professional standards and enforcement of regulation
- Connect regulatory activities and economic development

Think of DORA as your collective resource for ensuring fairness and fighting fraud.

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## **December** 2007

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### **Conserve Energy to Save Money**



Did you know? Plasma TVs consume two to three times more energy than other smaller types of TVs. Some models can suck up as much electricity each year as a refrigerator. Winter brings snow to the slopes and higher energy bills to your mailbox. If energy bills become a burden, contact your energy company to ask about payment plans or call 1-866-HEAT-HELP to see if you qualify for an energy assistance program.

The best way to keep your bills under control is to implement the following conservation tips:

- Grab a sweater and turn the thermostat down.
- Install a programmable thermostat to regulate temperatures.
- Replace furnace filters regularly.
- Turn off the lights when you leave a room.
- Outfit your light fixtures with compact fluorescent light bulbs.
- Rather than heat your oven, cook in the microwave.
- Wash only full loads of dishes and laundry.
- Open the shades and let the sun turn up the heat.
- · Wrap your water heater with an insulation blanket.
- Insulate the first 3 feet of pipes going into and out of the water heater.
- Seal leaks around windows and doors.

If you have a service problem with a utility company, remember that you can file a complaint with the Public Utilities Commission.

#### Your resource:

PUC Consumer Affairs 1560 Broadway, Suite 250, Denver, CO 80202 303-894-2070 (local); 1-800-456-0858 (toll-free) Email: **PUCConsumer.Complaints@dora.state.co.us** http://www.dora.state.co.us/puc

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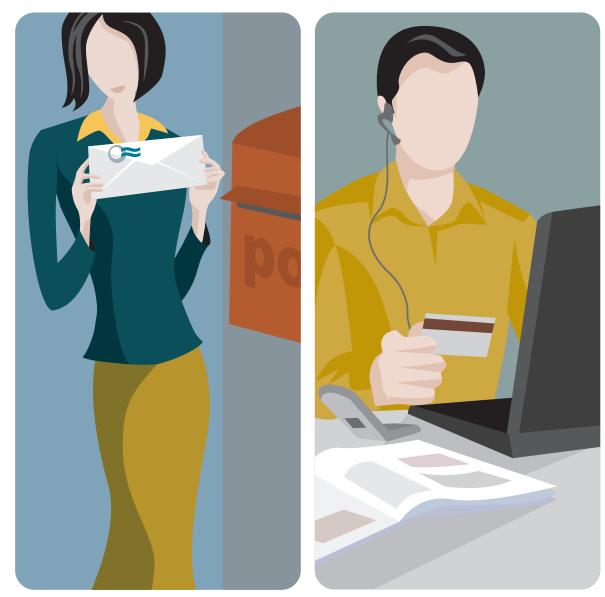
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		New Year's Day <b>1</b>	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	National Cut Your <b>10</b> Energy Costs Day	11	12
13	National Clean Off <b>14</b> Your Desk Day	15	16	Get to Know Your <b>17</b> Customers Day	18	19
20	Martin Luther <b>21</b> King, Jr. Day	22	23	24	25	26
27	Better Business <b>28</b> Communication Day	29	30	31	Consumer Protection	

To sign up on our email distribution list to receive consumer updates, send a request to DORACommunications@dora.state.co.us

## **Fight Identity Theft**



#### Your resources:

**Division of Banking** Tel: 303-894-7575 http://www.dora.state. co.us/banking

Division of Financial Services Division of Securities Tel: 303-894-2336 http://www.dora.state. co.us/financial-services

Tel: 303-894-2320 http://www.dora.state. co.us/securities

Division of Insurance Tel: 303-894-7499 http://www.dora.state. co.us/insurance

In our impersonal world, identity theft has become almost as common as shoplifting. It happens when your personal information is used without your consent.

If you become a victim, act immediately. Contact your bank or credit union, credit card companies and creditors. Next, file a report with your local law enforcement agency. After that:

- 1) File a report with the Federal Trade Commission (www.consumer.gov/idtheft or 1-877-ID-THEFT).
- 2) Place a fraud alert with all three major credit reporting bureaus:

Equifax—www.equifax.com—1-888-766-0008

Experian—www.experian.com— 1-888-EXPERIAN (397-3742)

- Transunion—www.transunion.com— 1-800-680-7289
- 3) Close accounts that have been accessed or opened without your consent.
- 4) If your long-distance account has been violated, notify the phone company.
- 5) Contact the post office if your mail has been stolen.
- 6) Consult the Social Security Administration if you think someone is using your number.
- 7) Notify the U.S. State Department if your passport has been stolen.
- 8) If a collection agency calls, explain that you are a victim of identity theft.

DORA houses the Divisions of Banking, Financial Services, Securities, and Insurance. For more information on preventing identity theft and other fraud, please visit our websites.

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Consumer Protection	Did you know? A lot to personal informa	t of identity theft begins i ition by rifling through tr	n the dumpster. Many crir ash.	minals gain access	1	2
3	4	5	Ash Wednesday <b>6</b>	7	8	
10	11	12	Employee Legal <b>13</b> Awareness Day	Valentine's Day <b>14</b>	15	10
17	President's Day <b>18</b>	19	20	21	22	2
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### Protect Yourself From Mortgage Fraud





Buying a house is challenging enough without having to worry about mortgage fraud. Be very wary if you are asked to inflate your income on an application, provide false information, or sign documents that contain blanks. Don't let anyone discourage you from visiting, appraising or inspecting the property in question.

To protect yourself, insist on a transparent transaction. You have the right to timely and accurate information about your loan, its total cost and how the mortgage broker's commission is calculated. You should receive written notice explaining *all* changes to your loan at least three days before closing. If your loan is denied, you should receive the appraisal, credit report and title documents within five days of requesting them.

Finally, know that the State of Colorado takes a tough stance against mortgage fraud and requires licensure of all Colorado mortgage brokers.

#### Your resources:

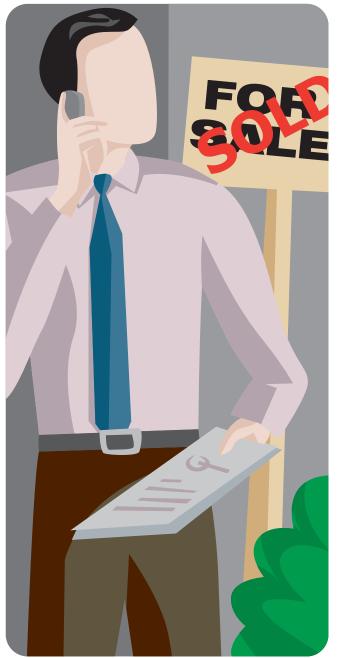
Division of Real Estate Tel: 303-894-2166 http://www.dora.state.co.us/real-estate Foreclosure Hotline: 1-877-601-HOPE

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## **March** 2008

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Consumer Protection	Did you know? Col Check the status of	orado requires that its 20 f your broker at http://es	0,000 mortgage brokers c ervices.psiexams.com/cre	comply with state licensing c/search.jsp	g requirements.	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Daylight Savings Time <b>9</b> Begins	10	11	12	13	14	15
Palm Sunday <b>16</b>	St. Patrick's Day <b>17</b>	18	19	Spring Begins <b>20</b>	Good Friday <b>21</b> International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	22
Easter 23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Doctor's Day <b>30</b>	31					

### Watch Out for Predatory Loans





Predatory loans are designed to rob property owners of their equity or force them into foreclosure.

How do you know if a housing loan is predatory? Look for these indicators:

- The loan calls for payments the buyer cannot afford.
- The loan terms change at closing.
- The loan is for more than 100 percent of the property's value.
- The applicant is asked to inflate income levels or supply incorrect information.
- The loan pays off a lower-interest mortgage.

Predatory loans are often marketed to people who have historically experienced discrimination based on race, color, ancestry, religion, disabilities and gender. If you suspect that you've been targeted for a predatory loan, the State of Colorado may be able to help.

#### Your resources:

The Colorado Civil Rights Division 303-894-2997 or 1-800-262-4845 (Colorado only) 719-542-1298 (Pueblo Office) Hearing Impaired: 711 www.dora.state.co.us/civil-rights

Fair Housing Hotline: 1-866-231-6946

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Passover 20	21	Earth Day <b>22</b>	Secretary/Admin. <b>23</b> Professional's Day	24	25	26
27	Cubicle Day 28	National Teach <b>29</b> Your Children to Save Day	Hairstylist <b>30</b> Appreciation Day	Did you know? The a large grant to crac	federal government has av k down on housing discrii	warded Colorado nination.

To sign up on our email distribution list to receive consumer updates, send a request to DORACommunications@dora.state.co.us

### Time to Move? Make it Smooth



Even the best-planned move is disruptive, and you can ease the stress if you begin planning two to six weeks in advance. It's wise to get written estimates from several movers—and be skeptical of any estimate that is dramatically lower than the others.

Most movers will need to see your goods to estimate accurately, so disregard an estimate made by phone. Before signing a contract, identify which company is actually moving your belongings. Some advertised moving services are simply brokers. Don't forget to ask about the mover's responsibilities for damages. And finally, be on hand when the movers are at your house.

If your property is lost or damaged, file a claim. After an interstate move, you have nine months to file an initial claim. The mover must acknowledge the claim within 30 days and resolve it within 120 days.

Even if you are filing a damages claim, you must still pay for the move. And remember, items in boxes not packed by the mover are generally not covered in a damage claim.

#### Your resources:

The Public Utilities Commission at DORA regulates *intrastate* household movers.

#### **PUC Consumer Affairs**

303-894-2070 or 1-800-456-0858 (outside the Denver metro area) Complaints may be filed at http://www.dora.state.co.us/pls/real/ CCTS\_oWEB.trans\_complaint\_form

To see if a moving company is registered with the PUC and has active insurance, click on http://www.dora.state.co.us/pls/real/PUC\_Permit.Search\_Form

For complaints about *interstate* moves, call the federal household goods hotline at 1-888-368-7238 or visit **www.1-888-dot-saft.com**.

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# May 2008

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4	Cinco de Mayo 5	Nurse's Day <b>6</b>	7	8	9	10
Mother's Day <b>11</b>	12	13	Receptionist's Day <b>14</b>	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	Memorial Day <b>26</b>	27	28	29	30	31

### Remodel and Renovate Without the Headaches



Home improvements are one of the best ways to enhance your home's value. Protect your investment every time you embark on a project. Here's how:

- Get several bids in writing. Don't automatically choose the lowest bidder, but do talk to previous customers about their experiences. And remember, estimates should be free of charge.
- Don't pay the full amount until work is completed.
- Though the State does not license or regulate general contractors, some local jurisdictions do. Check with your local building department to find out if they require licensure and if your contractor is properly licensed.
- Check with your local BBB to see if your contractor consistently delivers satisfactory work.

You can check the status of licenses and research disciplinary actions filed against some of the other professionals that DORA regulates, such as architects, engineers, plumbers, plumbing contractors, electricians and electrical contractors.

#### Your resource:

DORA Division of Registrations Tel: 303-894-7800 http://www.dora.state.co.us/registrations/ Verification.htm

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## **June** 2008

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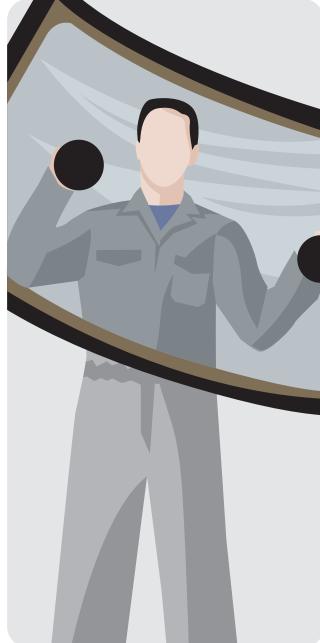
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Race Unity Day <b>8</b>	9	10	11	Nursing <b>12</b> Assistant's Day	13	Flag Day <b>14</b>
Father's Day <b>15</b>	16	17	18	19	20	Summer Begins <b>21</b>
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	Consumer Protection	Did you know buried lines in	? If you call 811 before you your yard for free.	dig, the utility companies	s will mark

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### **Comparison Shop for Auto Insurance**





When you're in the market for car insurance, it makes sense to comparison shop. It's also important to review the financial condition of the insurance company, its customer service record, and your own financial needs.

You can reduce premiums by:

- Driving defensively and avoiding accidents and tickets
- Keeping your mileage to a minimum (the fewer miles you drive, the lower your premiums)
- Raising your deductible
- Taking advantage of discounts for insuring two or more cars with the same carrier
- Installing anti-theft devices, airbags and other safety equipment
- Completing a reputable driver's ed course
- Be mindful that your credit score affects your premiums.

And remember, every Colorado driver *must* carry automobile insurance.

#### Your resource:

Division of Insurance Tel: 303-894-7490 http://www.dora.state.co.us/insurance/consumer/ automain.htm

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# **July** 2008

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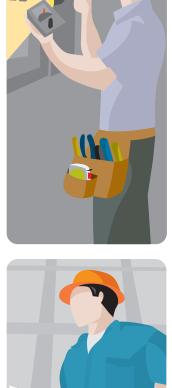
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Did you know? You ca insurance rates right o Insurance's website at state.co.us/insurance/	on the Division of t http://www.dora.	1	2	3	Independence Day <b>4</b>	5
ike Your Webmaster <b>6</b> Lunch Day	7	8	9	10	11	1:
13	14	15	16	17	18	1
20	21	22	23	24	System <b>25</b> Administrator Appreciation Day	2
27	28	29	30	31	Consumer Protection	

## Verify the Status of Professional Licenses with ALISON









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The Colorado Division of Registrations offers a user-friendly way to verify information about a doctor, veterinarian, chiropractor, plumber, electrician and many other licensed professionals.

Using the Automated Licensure Information System Online, ALISON, will allow you to ensure that the person is licensed. You can also check to see if any disciplinary actions have been taken against the licensee.

The Division of Registrations works to ensure that only qualified professionals are licensed. It also reviews complaints to protect consumers from incompetent or unethical professionals.

To supplement the information you get from ALISON, you may want to make inquiries with the BBB, which also collects information about many Colorado businesses and professionals.

#### Your resource:

Division of Registrations Tel: 303-894-7800 http://www.dora.state.co.us/registrations

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## August 2008

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3	4	5	6	Professional <b>7</b> Speaker's Day	8	9
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### Protect Your Loved Ones With Life Insurance



September is Life Insurance Month, which makes it the perfect time to learn about the many policy options available.

Consumers can choose from three main categories of life insurance: term life, whole life and universal life, with options within each category.

**Term life insurance,** the least expensive type of policy, has no cash value. It pays a specific lump sum to the beneficiary upon the death of the insured person.

**Whole life insurance** provides protection for dependents while building cash value.

**Universal life insurance** gives the policyholder more control over premiums and provides permanent protection for dependents.

Do you need life insurance? The answer is yes if there are people who count on you. To calculate how much you need, multiply your family's annual expenses, allowing for inflation, by the number of years in the future you believe your dependents will need support. Remember to include future costs like college tuition. Some advisors recommend a policy that exceeds two to six times the policyholder's annual income.

#### Your resource:

Division of Insurance Tel: 303-894-7490 http://www.dora.state.co.us/insurance/consumer/ Life&Annmain.htm

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## September 2008

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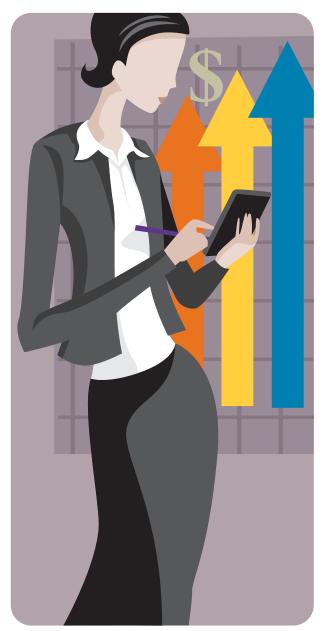
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Grandparent's Day <b>7</b>	8	9	10	Patriot Day <b>11</b>	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	Autumn Begins <b>22</b>	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	Rosh Hashanah <b>30</b>	Did you know they do on life	? Americans spend more e e insurance.	ach year on alcohol and ci	garettes than

### Just Say No to Investment Scams





Before investing in any proposed scheme, here is some time-tested advice: If it sounds too good to be true, it is!

**Beware** of your inclination to trust. Con artists will not hesitate to exploit your good nature. Remember, a stranger who calls to ask for your money should be regarded with suspicion.

**Beware** of any investment professional, or con artist, who presses you to make an immediate decision. Insist on time to research the opportunity. Ask for written information about the opportunity, and make sure you understand all the risks.

**Beware** of any financial professional who suggests you put your money into something you don't understand.

**Beware** of the smooth talker. Successful con artists can make even the flimsiest deal seem financially sound.

Beware of salespeople who prey on your fears.

Finally, never let embarrassment keep you from reporting investment fraud. Although money lost to investment fraud is seldom recovered, it is critical that authorities learn about the scams confronting Colorado citizens.

#### Your resource:

Division of Securities 303-894-2320 http://www.dora.state.co.us/securities

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at http://www.dora.sta Game" will challenge y	vision of Securities hosts tw ate.co.us/securities."Avoidin rour investor awareness skil ill help teach you to avoid in	g Investor Scams Is and "FSI: Fraud	1	2	National Diversity <b>3</b> Day	4
5	6	7	8	Yom Kippur <b>9</b>	Emergency <b>10</b> Nurse's Day World Mental Health Day	11
12	Columbus Day <b>13</b>	14	15	National Boss's Day <b>16</b> International Credit Union Day	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	Halloween <b>31</b>	Consumer Protection

## **Control Health Insurance Costs**



Whether supplemented by your employer or paid out of your pocket, health insurance is an important factor in any budget. Take the following steps to curb costs:

- Review your plan regularly and adjust your options to meet needs.
- Stay in-network as much as possible and obtain referrals as required.
- Avoid penalties by understanding your plan's requirements.
- Consider opening a health savings account (HSA) and enrolling in a plan with a high deductible.
- Take advantage of a flexible spending account, if offered by your employer. This plan lets you set aside pre-tax dollars for medical expenses.

Should you lose your job, be sure to familiarize yourself with the insurance provisions provided by COBRA, the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act.

#### Your resource:

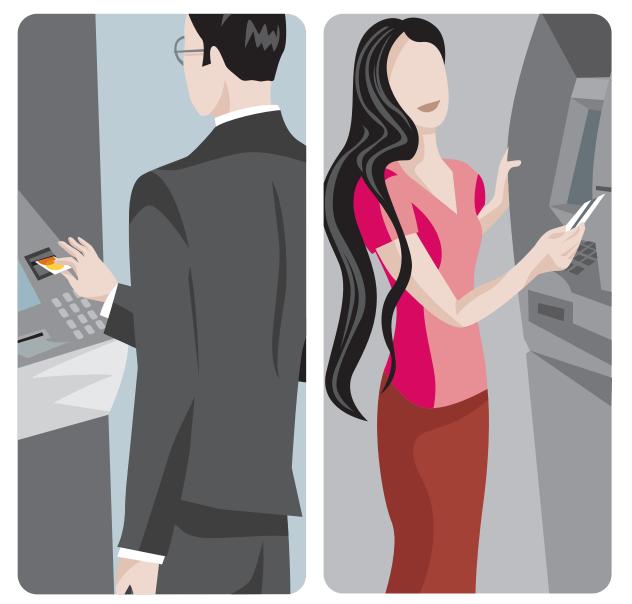
Division of Insurance Tel: 303-894-7490 http://www.dora.state.co.us/insurance/ consumer/healthmain.htm

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## November 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Consumer Protection	Did you know population, de	? According to the U.S. Ce bes not have health insura	nsus bureau, 45 million Am Ince. In Colorado, 17 percei	ericans, or more than 15 p nt are uninsured.	percent of the	1
Daylight Savings Time <b>2</b> Ends	3	Election Day <b>4</b>	5	6	7	8
9	10	Veteran's Day <b>11</b>	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	National Education <b>19</b> Support Professional's Day	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	Thanksgiving <b>27</b>	28	29
30						

### Improve Your Credit Report



#### Your resources:

Division of Banking Tel: 303-894-7575 http://www.dora.state.co.us/ banking Division of Financial Services Tel: 303-894-2336 http://www.dora.state.co.us/ financial-services Division of Securities Tel: 303-894-2320 http://www.dora.state.co.us/ securities If you've ever applied for a loan or a credit card, you know the importance of your credit report.

Your credit report is maintained by consumer reporting companies that make it available to bankers, creditors, employers and a host of others. The report tells them if you pay your bills on time, whether you've filed for bankruptcy and if you have past-due accounts that have been referred to collection agencies.

A clean credit report ensures that you can get loans at lower interest rates. Contact the three major credit reporting bureaus and ask for a copy of your report:

Equifax—www.equifax.com—1-888-766-0008

**Experian—www.experian.com**—1-888-EXPERIAN (397-3742)

**Transunion—www.transunion.com**— 1-800-680-7289

If the report contains inaccuracies, dispute those in writing. Credit reporting bureaus are required by law to investigate such disputes.

To maintain a good credit record, make at least the minimum payment on all your bills on time. If you can't do so, contact the creditor and explain your situation. Many will renegotiate your payments.

#### **Additional resource:**

The Federal Trade Commission

http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/credit/cre03.shtm

DORA holds the Divisions of Banking, Financial Services and Securities. For more information on financial literacy and prevention tips against fraud, please visit our websites.

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## December 2008

 JANUARY 2009

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Winter Begins <b>21</b>	Hanukkah Begins <b>22</b>	23	24	Christmas <b>25</b>	Kwanzaa Begins <b>26</b>	27
28	29	30	New Year's Eve <b>31</b>	Did you know? Ye report once ever	ou are entitled to a free co y 12 months.	py of your credit

## 2009 At a Glance

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http://www.dora.state.co.us | 303-894-7855 | 1-800-886-7675 (Toll Free) | TDD Users-711

### Additional Information about DORA's Services

#### Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies, 1560 Broadway, Suite 1550, Denver, Colorado 80202

Divisions	Suite	Phone	Alternative Contact/Website	Fax		
Main Office	1550	303-894-7855	800-886-7675	303-894-7885		
Division of Banking	975	303-894-7575		303-894-7570		
State Banking Board						
Division of Civil Rights	1050	303-894-2997	800-262-4845	303-894-7830		
Civil Rights 200 West "B" Street, Pueblo, CO		719-542-1298				
Civil Rights Commission						
Office of Consumer Counsel	200	303-894-2121		303-894-2117		
Division of Financial Services	950	303-894-2336		303-894-7886		
Financial Services Board						
Division of Insurance	850	303-894-7499	800-930-3745	303-894-7455		
Consumer Insurance Council						
Producer Advisory Council						
Bail Bonds Advisory Committee						
Title Advisory Council						
Policy, Research & Regulatory Reform	1550	303-894-7855		303-894-7885		
Public Utilities Commission (PUC)	250	303-894-2000		303-894-2065		
Consumer Complaint Line		303-894-2070	800-456-0858			
Public Utilities Commission						
Division of Real Estate	925	303-894-2166	303-894-2185	303-894-2683		
Board of Real Estate Appraisers						
Real Estate Commission						
Mortgage Broker Disclosures						
Division of Registrations	1350	303-894-7800		303-894-7693		
Accountancy		303-894-7800	http://www.dora.state.co.us/accountants	5/		
Acupuncturists		303-894-7800	http://www.dora.state.co.us/acupunctur	http://www.dora.state.co.us/acupuncturists/		
Architects, Engineers and Land Surveyors		303-894-7800	http://www.dora.state.co.us/aes/	http://www.dora.state.co.us/aes/		
Audiologists/Hearing Aid Providers		303-894-7800	http://www.dora.state.co.us/audiologists	http://www.dora.state.co.us/audiologists/		
Barbers, Cosmetologists, Estheticians, Hairsty	lists, and Manicurists	303-894-7800	http://www.dora.state.co.us/barbers_cos	http://www.dora.state.co.us/barbers_cosmetologists/		
Boxing		303-894-7800	http://www.dora.state.co.us/boxing/	http://www.dora.state.co.us/boxing/		
Chiropractic		303-894-7800	http://www.dora.state.co.us/chiropractic	http://www.dora.state.co.us/chiropractic/		
Dental		303-894-7800	http://www.dora.state.co.us/dental/	http://www.dora.state.co.us/dental/		
Electrical		303-894-2300	http://www.dora.state.co.us/electrical/			

Divisions	Suite	Phone	Alternative Contact/Website	Fax	
Division of Registrations (continued)	1350	303-894-7800		303-894-7693	
Landscape Architects		303-894-7800	http://www.dora.state.co.us/la/		
Medical		303-894-7690	http://www.dora.state.co.us/medical/		
Midwives		303-894-7800	http://www.dora.state.co.us/midwives/		
Nursing		303-894-2430	http://www.dora.state.co.us/nursing/		
Nursing Home Administrators		303-894-7800	http://www.dora.state.co.us/nursing-hom	e-administrators/	
Optometry		303-894-7800	http://www.dora.state.co.us/optometry/		
Outfitters		303-894-7800	http://www.dora.state.co.us/outfitters/		
Passenger Tramway		303-894-7785	http://www.dora.state.co.us/tramway/		
Pharmacy		303-894-7800	http://www.dora.state.co.us/pharmacy/		
Physical Therapists		303-894-7800	http://www.dora.state.co.us/physical-ther	ару/	
Plumbing		303-894-2300	http://www.dora.state.co.us/plumbing/		
Podiatry	liatry		http://www.dora.state.co.us/podiatrists/		
Respiratory Therapy		303-894-7800	http://www.dora.state.co.us/respiratory-therapy/		
Veterinarians		303-894-7800	http://www.dora.state.co.us/veterinarians.	/	
Mental Health Section		303-894-7800	http://www.dora.state.co.us/mental-healt	h/	
Addiction Counselors		303-894-7800	http://www.dora.state.co.us/mental-healt	h/	
Unlicensed Psychotherapists		303-894-7800	http://www.dora.state.co.us/mental-health/		
Marriage and Family Therapists		303-894-7800	http://www.dora.state.co.us/mental-healt	h/	
Professional Counselors		303-894-7800	http://www.dora.state.co.us/mental-healt	h/	
Psychologists		303-894-7800	http://www.dora.state.co.us/mental-health/		
Social Workers		303-894-7800	http://www.dora.state.co.us/mental-health/		
Division of Securities 900		303-894-2320		303-861-2126	
Securities Board					
Municipal Bond Supervision Advisory Board					

Other Useful Consumer Contact Information	Phone	Website
Colorado Home Page		www.colorado.gov
Colorado Attorney General Consumer Resource Guide	303-866-4500	www.ago.state.co.us/consprot/CRGindex.cfm
Colorado Secretary of State	303-894-2200	www.sos.state.co.us
Colorado Department of Revenue	303-866-3091	www.revenue.state.co.us
Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade	303-892-3840	www.advancecolorado.com
Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Division of Housing, Foreclosure Hotline	303-866-2033	www.dola.state.co.us
Colorado Department of Labor and Employment	303-318-8000	www.coworkforce.com
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment	303-692-2000	www.cdphe.state.co.us







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