



# ECFH Financially Speaking

East Caribbean Financial Holding Company Limited

The Christmas season is once again upon us, and the celebrations are set to begin. Whether it's shopping for loved ones, decorating your homes or undertaking renovation projects, it will be a busy season for many. With this in mind, we are happy to provide you our weekly readers, with a few personal and financial safety tips regarding the use of credit cards and ATM machines.

- **Stay Alert:** Always be aware of your surroundings when you use an ATM, especially at night. If you have a vehicle, it's best to park in a well-lit area and if possible, have someone accompany you. If you have, any suspicions about a particular ATM, simply walk away.
- **Be Prepared:** To complete your transaction safely; have your card ready before arriving at the ATM. When you have completed your transaction, pocket your card, receipt and cash immediately. You can count the cash later.
- **Treat Your Credit Card like Cash:** Guard your credit card as carefully as you would cash and cheques. Never give account numbers or card information over the phone, unless absolutely necessary.
- **Keep Your Personal Identification Number (PIN) Secret:** Don't write your PIN on your card or keep it in your wallet. Memorize your number and do not give it to anyone-not even family members. If you do not remember your PIN, do not attempt to use the card with an incorrect PIN more than twice. Remember, on the third incorrect attempt, the ATM will retain the card.
- **Save Your Receipts:** Keep all receipts so that you can reconcile your purchases with your month end statements.
- **Report a Lost or Stolen Card Immediately:** In the event that your card is lost, it is imperative that you report it immediately. This will prevent unscrupulous persons from using your card to purchase items. Credit card companies usually provide a toll free number, which clients can call to report such incidents. This number however, should be kept separate from the card in a safe place. This ensures that the toll-free number is not lost too if the card or wallet is stolen.

Remember, before shopping always ensure that you have prepared a budget for all your Christmas spending. It's the season of giving, but overspending could place you in a compromising financial situation later. Create a budget in advance and stick to it. Celebrate the season and spend wisely.

For more information on credit and debit card safety, contact the Card Services Department of Bank of Saint Lucia at 457-7151. This is our final article for the year and we at the East Caribbean Financial Holdings Company Limited (ECFH) would like to wish all our customers and the general public an enjoyable and financially safe yuletide season.