

## How to Organize Your Monthly, Quarterly and Annual Bills

- ✓ Paying your bills promptly will help you avoid late fees and save you money.
- ✓ Following basic steps will help you get rid of procrastination and keep your finances in good order.
- ✓ Set aside a special place to put your bills when they arrive, such as a special slot on your desk, a special section in a drawer or a bill inbox. Remember to always put your bills in this special place immediately upon their arrival.
- ✓ Set aside two times a month, two weeks apart, to pay bills. The middle and end of the month are good times.
- ✓ Call the companies that send you bills and have them revise your payment due dates to correspond with one of the two times monthly you plan to pay your bills.
- ✓ Mark your calendar to remind you of bill-paying dates, then pay on schedule.
- ✓ Pay your bills with checks or money orders, then note on the receipt portion of the bills your check number and the date and amount you paid.
- ✓ File these receipts away and keep them for up to seven years.
- ✓ Place the outgoing envelopes containing your payments next to your car or house keys, so that you remember to take them with you and mail them immediately.
- ✓ Be sure to continue your bill-paying efforts all the way to the mailbox. Nothing is more frustrating than to write your bills on time, then find them not mailed in the back seat of your car a week later.
- ✓ Some credit card companies, mortgage lenders and automobile financing companies move due dates around. Check the due dates for such bills as soon as they arrive in the mail.

Utility and phone companies are usually a little more flexible and will wait for a few days before they send you a reminder notice or charge you a late fee. Credit card companies, mortgage and automobile lenders, oil companies and landlords are not as forgiving. Many banks allow you to set up automatic bill payment with your checking account. Call your bank to find out if it offers such a service. But be careful...unpaid bills can lead to disconnected utilities, a bad credit rating and debt.