

**Credit Cards: Make Sure to Spend Smartly; Carefully**  
*Texas Society of CPAs Offers Advice on Reading the Fine Print*

How much money are you planning to spend on friends and family this holiday season? According to the American Research Group with regards to Christmas gift spending, the average family will spend \$646, down slightly from last year. If you're purchasing with a credit card and aren't paying the monthly bill in full, it can really cost you.

Texas Society of CPAs says consumers should carefully read the fine print on credit card offers and be wary of cards with low introductory interest rates that increase significantly after the introductory period. Paying high rates and late payment penalties can leave you crying in your egg nog.

According to TSCPA, people should take time to understand the financial terms and obligations when they apply for credit, and to make sure they can afford potential rate increases.

Not all credit cards are the same. Consumers should shop around for a card with the best rates and be leery of deals that sound too good to be true.

Once you get a credit card, make sure you pay your bill on time each month and keep your eyes open for changes to the card's terms.

TSCPA says you can establish a good credit history by using a credit card responsibly and making timely payments. Not doing so can negatively affect your credit score.