

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT NOTICE TO INDIVIDUAL CONSUMER DEBTOR

The purpose of this notice is to acquaint you with the four chapters of the federal Bankruptcy Code under which you may file a bankruptcy petition. The bankruptcy law is complicated and not easily described. Therefore, you should seek the advice of an attorney to learn of your rights and responsibilities under the law should you decide to file a petition with the court. Court employees are prohibited from giving you legal advice.

Chapter 7: Liquidation (\$145 filing fee plus \$30 administrative fee)

1. Chapter 7 is designed for debtors in financial difficulty who do not have the ability to pay their existing debts.
2. Under chapter 7 a trustee takes possession of all your property. You may claim certain of your property as exempt under governing law. The trustee then liquidates the property and uses the proceeds to pay your creditors according to priorities of the Bankruptcy Code.
3. The purpose of filing a chapter 7 case is to obtain a discharge of your existing debts. If, however, you are found to have committed certain kinds of improper conduct described in the Bankruptcy Code, your discharge may be denied by the court, and the purpose for which you filed the bankruptcy petition will be defeated.
4. Even if you receive a discharge, there are some debts that are not discharged under the law. Therefore, you may still be responsible for such debts as certain taxes and student loans, alimony and support payments, criminal restitution, and debts for death or personal injury caused by driving while intoxicated from alcohol or drugs.
5. Under certain circumstances you may keep property that you have purchased subject to valid security interest. Your attorney can explain the options that are available to you.

Chapter 13: Repayment of All or Part of the Debts of an Individual with Regular Income (\$130 filing fee plus \$30 administrative fee)

1. Chapter 13 is designed for individuals with regular income who are temporarily unable to pay their debts but would like to pay them in installments over a period of time. You are only eligible for chapter 13 if your debts do not exceed certain dollar amounts set forth in the Bankruptcy Code.
2. Under chapter 13 you must file a plan with the court to repay your creditors all or part of the money that you owe them, using your future earnings. Usually, the period allowed by the court to repay your debts is three years, but no more than five years. Your plan must be approved by the court before it can take effect.
3. Under chapter 13, unlike chapter 7, you may keep all your property, both exempt and non-exempt, as long as you continue to make payments under the plan.
4. After completion of payments under the plan, your debts are discharged except alimony and support payments, student loans, certain debts including criminal fines and restitution and debts for death or personal injury caused by driving while intoxicated from alcohol or drugs, and long term secured obligations.

Chapter 11: Reorganization (\$800 filing fee plus \$30 administrative fee)

Chapter 11 is designed primarily for the reorganization of a business but is also available to consumer debtors. Its provisions are quite complicated, and any decision by an individual to file a chapter 11 petition should be reviewed with an attorney.

Chapter 12: Family farmer (\$200 filing fee plus \$30 administrative fee)

Chapter 12 is designed to permit family farmers to repay their debts over a period of time from future earnings and is in many ways similar to chapter 13. The eligibility requirements are restrictive, limiting its use to those whose income arises primarily from a family-owned farm.

I, the debtor, affirm that I have read this notice.

Date	Signature of Debtor	Case Number
	DEBTOR COPY COURT COPY	
	(circle one)	

STATEMENT OF INFORMATION REQUIRED BY 11 U.S.C. § 341

INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to the Bankruptcy Reform Act of 1994, the Office of the United States Trustee, United States Department of Justice, has prepared this information sheet to help you understand some of the possible consequences of filing a bankruptcy petition under chapter 7 of the Bankruptcy Code. This information is intended to make you aware of

- (1) the potential consequences of seeking a discharge in bankruptcy, including the effects on credit history;
- (2) the effect of receiving a discharge of debts;
- (3) the effect of reaffirming a debt; and
- (4) your ability to file a petition under a different chapter of the Bankruptcy Code.

There are many other provisions of the Bankruptcy Code that may affect your situation. This information sheet contains only general principles of law and is not a substitute for legal advice. If you have questions or need further information as to how the bankruptcy laws apply to your specific case, you should consult with your lawyer.

WHAT IS A DISCHARGE?

The filing of a chapter 7 petition is designed to result in a discharge of most of the debts you listed on your bankruptcy schedules. A discharge is a court order that says you do not have to repay your debts, but there are a number of exceptions. Debts which may not be discharged in your chapter 7 case include, for example, most taxes, child support, alimony, and student loans; court-ordered fines and restitution; debts obtained through fraud or deception; and personal injury debts caused by driving while intoxicated or taking drugs. Your discharge may be denied entirely if you, for example, destroy or conceal property; destroy, conceal or falsify records; or make a false oath. Creditors cannot ask you to pay any debts which have been discharged. You can only receive a chapter 7 discharge once every six (6) years.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF A DISCHARGE?

The fact that you filed bankruptcy can appear on your credit report for as long as 10 years. Thus, filing a bankruptcy petition may affect your ability to obtain credit in the future. Also, you may not be excused from repaying any debts that were not listed on your bankruptcy schedules or that you incurred after you filed bankruptcy.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF REAFFIRMING A DEBT?

After you file your petition, a creditor may ask you to reaffirm a certain debt or you may seek to do so on your own. Reaffirming a debt means that you sign and file with the court a legally enforceable document, which states that you promise to repay all or a portion of the debt that may otherwise have been discharged in your bankruptcy case. Reaffirmation agreements must generally be filed with the court within 60 days after the first meeting of creditors.

Reaffirmation agreements are strictly voluntary - they are not required by the Bankruptcy Code or other state or federal law. You can voluntarily repay any debt instead of signing a reaffirmation agreement, but there may be valid reasons for wanting to reaffirm a particular debt.

Reaffirmation agreements must not impose an undue burden on you or your dependents and must be in your best interest. If you decide to sign a reaffirmation agreement, you may cancel it at any time before the court issues your discharge order or within sixty (60) days after the reaffirmation agreement was filed with the court, whichever is later. If you reaffirm a debt and fail to make the payments required in the reaffirmation agreement, the creditor can take action against you to recover any property that was given as security for the loan and you may remain personally liable for any remaining debt.

OTHER BANKRUPTCY OPTIONS

You have a choice in deciding what chapter of the Bankruptcy Code will best suit your needs. Even if you have already filed for relief under chapter 7, you may be eligible to convert your case to a different chapter.

Chapter 7 is the liquidation chapter of the Bankruptcy Code. Under chapter 7, a trustee is appointed to collect and sell, if economically feasible, all property you own that is not exempt from these actions.

Chapter 11 is the reorganization chapter most commonly used by businesses, but it is also available to individuals. Creditors vote on whether to accept or reject a plan, which also must be approved by the court. While the debtor normally remains in control of the assets, the court can order the appointment of a trustee to take possession and control of the business.

Chapter 12 offers bankruptcy relief to those who qualify as family farmers. Family farmers must propose a plan to repay their creditors over a three-to-five year period and it must be approved by the court. Plan payments are made through a chapter 12 trustee, who also monitors the debtors' farming operations during the pendency of the plan.

Finally, chapter 13 generally permits individuals to keep their property by repaying creditors out of their future income. Each chapter 13 debtor writes a plan which must be approved by the bankruptcy court. The debtor must pay the chapter 13 trustee the amounts set forth in their plan. Debtors receive a discharge after they complete their chapter 13 repayment plan. Chapter 13 is only available to individuals with regular income whose debts do not exceed \$1,077,000 (\$269,250 in unsecured debts and \$807,750 in secured debts).

AGAIN, PLEASE SPEAK TO YOUR LAWYER IF YOU NEED FURTHER INFORMATION OR EXPLANATION, INCLUDING HOW THE BANKRUPTCY LAWS RELATE TO YOUR SPECIFIC CASE.