

You worked hard for your money - don't let a stranger steal it from you.

GIFT CARD/GIFT CERTIFICATE TIPS

Gift cards are very popular because they allow the recipient to “get what he or she really wants” - but not all gift cards are the same.

A *gift card or gift certificate* is one that is valid only for a specific business, store or restaurant.

Universal” or “general use prepaid” gift cards are the most frequently purchased because they allow the recipient to shop just about anywhere, including retailers and restaurants. Examples include mall gift cards contained on a plastic card or other electronic payment device and redeemable at unaffiliated stores throughout the mall.

Gift cards & gift certificates

North Dakota’s law covers gift cards & gift certificates.

- The recipient may not be charged additional monthly or annual service or maintenance fees that reduces the value of the gift. The redemption period must be at least six years from the date of purchase. The gift certificate/card may not contain any statement suggesting a different expiration date.

Universal/“general use prepaid” cards

- Universal or “general use prepaid cards” are not subject to these rules. After the first year,

there is no limit on the monthly fee issuers can charge against the balance on the card. Check whether there are any fees and if so, the time period within which the card must be used to avoid incurring any fees. Be sure to tell the recipient about these conditions. The redemption period must be at least **five** years from the date of purchase.

Buying Tips

- Buy from a reputable business. If a company goes out of business or files for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, the gift card likely will be worthless.
- Check out all fees! Bank cards often have processing fees charged at the time of purchase. Cards purchased online or by phone may have additional processing fees. A business is not restricted from charging a fee when the card is purchased. It may also charge a fee to replace a lost or stolen card.
- Read all disclosures as well as terms and conditions of use before purchasing the card or certificate. Keep track of purchases made with card or certificate.
- Do not discard the card immediately after you use the cash value. If you need to return an item, the business policy may dictate the refund be replaced on the certificate or card.