



## **ABA News to Use**

*Keeping banking's frontline personnel informed*

### **Apply Caution to Gift Cards**

As the holiday shopping season gets under way, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, which regulates national banks, is advising consumers to carefully check the terms and conditions that apply to gift cards they may buy or receive.

“As we enter the holiday season, it is especially important that consumers be alert to the wide variety of terms and conditions available in the gift card market,” said Comptroller of the Currency John Dugan.

Some gift card issuers, for example, deduct a monthly fee from the gift card or apply inactivity fees if the card has not been used for some period of time. Gift card holders may not realize that the value of their cards has been reduced until they use them for a purchase.

The OCC suggests that consumers make sure they have received disclosures on some of the important terms and conditions of the gift card they purchase, including:

- The fees, if any, that apply to the gift card, including those that apply after the sale and reduce the value of the card.
- The expiration date of the gift card.
- The procedures to follow in the event a card is lost or stolen.
- The locations at which the gift card can be used.
- The procedures to follow in the event there are problems with the gift card.

If these disclosures are not stated on the gift card itself, or its packaging, the OCC suggests that consumers check to see if there is a toll-free number or Web site that will provide this information.

For more information, go to [www.occ.gov/ftp/release/2004-108a.pdf](http://www.occ.gov/ftp/release/2004-108a.pdf).

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*For information about ABA News to Use, or to suggest subjects for future articles, please contact ABA's [Brian Nixon](#).*