

What is a statute of limitations? - Updated: July, 2014

A statute of limitations is a state or federal statute that defines the period of time in which legal action can be taken. There are several statutes of limitations. Some may deal with mechanics liens, some deal with personal liability issues, criminal activity, etc. Statutes of limitations impact both criminal and civil cases.

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(function() {
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s.type = 'text/javascript';
s.src = 'http://widgets.digg.com/buttons.js';
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})();
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Congress and state legislatures set statutes of limitations because if too much time passes before legal action is taken then facts surrounding a particular incident or situation maybe lost or events forgotten. For certain crimes that are considered egregious - such as murder - there is no statute of limitations.

In the case of credit there are various statutes of limitations depending of the type of credit agreement involved. These statutes dictate the maximum time a creditor can wait before taking legal action.

We have compiled a list of the states and their statutes of limitations on the most common forms of credit. [Click here to review the list.](#)

Each statute also dictates when the statute time begins. In the case of credit it maybe when you last paid, or when you last charged, or when you last verbally reaffirmed the debt. Each state is different.