



Tips to Minimize Credit Card Fraud

Traffic is picking up for businesses now that the holiday season is here. In the coming weeks, it is as important as ever to safeguard against fraud. We want to remind you of some steps you can and should take to keep your credit card transactions safe. Take time to:

Compare every credit card customer's signature with the signature that appears on the back of the card. If it is not signed, ask for a driver's license to make the comparison.

Make sure the account numbers embossed on the card are the same as those being read off the magnetic stripe on the back of the card. Follow your terminal's prompt by entering the last four digits of the account number. Once entered, the terminal will indicate whether or not they are a match. If not, the terminal won't allow you to go forward with the transaction. Do not manually enter a transaction after you have received a "no match" message.

Even safer—know how to spot a fake. Examine cards to be sure they meet these criteria:

Visa, MasterCard, and Discover each have a ***hologram*** on the front of their card. They should appear three-dimensional, changing shape when rotated in the light. Visa's hologram is a dove, MasterCard's a globe, and Discover's a coin.

The embossed ***account number on the front of the card should be clear and straight***. If the card has been re-embossed, the numbers may appear fuzzy. Pay special attention to the last four numbers located in the hologram.

Right below the embossed account numbers is a ***pre-printed bank identification number***. It should match the first four numbers of the account number.

The card should also have an ***expiration date*** above the cardholder name.

A blank signature line on the back of any card is an indication that the card may have been altered. The signature panel on the back of the cards can vary. Look for MasterCard's angled repetitive pattern of its brand name, American Express's wavy lines, Visa's horizontal lines, and Discover's reverse printing of the account number.

Remind your staff members of the tools mentioned here and encourage them to make time for these important checks. Better yet, print a copy of this article and keep it by your credit card terminal as a reference.

Happy Holidays!