

Credit and Debit Card Safety

Credit and debit cards offer great convenience in eliminating the need to carry large amounts of cash, and allowing us to purchase items through postal order and over the phone and internet. However, these advantages also apply to fraudsters who are keen to use your card and details in order to make fraudulent purchases and transactions. The following tips are a few simple precautions that you can take to protect your cards and your personal details:

1. Never Give Out Personal or Bank Account Information

Your bank will never ask you for your full Personal Identification Number (PIN) or password, only a few numbers or letters from each. If someone claiming to be from your bank approaches you, phones you or emails you and asks for such information, refuse and contact your bank yourself as soon as possible using an advertised number.

2. Keep Your Card and Details Safe

Most fraud occurs from details which have stolen after paperwork or information is thrown away. Therefore, you should always keep statements and letters from the bank with card and account details in a safe place. If you do throw them away, then make sure that you shred or destroy them before disposing of them.

3. Keep Your Receipts

Keep your receipts from all transactions, especially those made with a credit or debit card. Not only do these provide proof of purchase in the event of any required refund or exchange, but can be used to check statements to ensure that all transactions have gone through correctly.

4. Always Check Your Statements

Get into the habit of checking your statements when they arrive. Look for any transactions that you do not recognise. This also applies to any funds entering your account as well as leaving. If you still do not know the origin of the transaction then contact your bank or credit card company immediately.

5. Only Shop Online at Secure Websites

Whenever entering any personal information, especially credit or debit card details, look for the secure website icon. This is a small padlock icon which appears in the bottom right hand side of your website page. The beginning of the retailer's Internet address will change from "http" to "https" when a purchase is made using a secure connection. If the page does not display the secure icon then do not complete the transaction and consider contacting the trader directly for more help.

6. Sign-Up to Verify Your Credit Card

When paying online with your credit card you may be given the option to sign up to a verification scheme to protect your card more. You simply have to enter a few personal details and choose a password. On all future transactions you will be asked to enter this password, along with your card details. Because only you will know this password, it verifies that you are in fact the card owner and allows the transaction to be completed. If you have any questions or queries about this scheme then you should contact your credit card company directly.

7. Print Out Your Order

When shopping online, always print off a copy of your order and the company's terms and conditions. Also make a note of the company's name and address, along with any contact details. Although the majority of online transactions go through fine and any disputes are dealt with directly by the company itself, a copy of the above information will help your bank with any disputed transactions.

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About the Author

Self Safe discusses personal and online safety issues for you and your family. Find out more about how to keep yourself and your family safe by visiting <http://www.self-safe.com>.