

MONEY MATTERS



Savvy Consumer Tips: Five Things To Know About Your Debit Card

(NAPSA)—When was the last time you were asked “Cash or check?” when you went to make a purchase? In today’s 24/7 society, the question is really “Paper or plastic?” In fact, the Federal Reserve Bank reports that debit cards are the fastest-growing payment type at retailers nationwide, with one in three U.S. shoppers using a debit card.

Like most people, you’re probably familiar with the benefits of your debit card—it’s fast, convenient and linked to your checking account. (After all, debit cards have been around since the 1970s!) But a lot has changed since then, and so have the offerings in your wallet.

Here are five tips that will keep you current on the best reasons, ways and places to use a debit card:

- **Debit rewards.** More financial institutions are now offering debit rewards programs. Check with your debit card issuer—you could be earning rewards for everything from travel to merchandise just by reaching for your debit card instead of paying with cash or checks.

- **More everyday ways to use debit.** Remember when you had to have cash on hand for certain purchases? Now more merchants that traditionally only took cash—including fast-food restaurants, movie theaters, taxis and convenience stores—have started accepting debit cards.

- **Your signature, please.** Debit cards offer protections that cash can’t. For instance, Visa check cards are covered by Visa’s Zero Liability policy, which means you pay nothing if unauthorized purchases are made on your Visa check card. Some issuing financial institutions also



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offer Zero Liability protections for some transactions with a PIN, but the best way to ensure you are protected is to sign and you’re covered by Visa’s multiple layers of security, including Zero Liability. If you notice fraudulent charges or mistakes on your account, contact your financial institution immediately.

- **Shop online with confidence.** When you shop online with a debit card, your transactions are recognized as if you’d signed for them. This allows you to use your debit card on the Internet with the same ease and security of a credit card.

- **Stick to your budget.** When you use a debit card, you’re immediately drawing on funds that are available in your account. You can check your statement online to see which debit transactions have cleared and monitor funds in your account. Debit charges are also summarized on monthly bank statements so you can analyze your spending at the end of the month and budget accordingly.

Note to Editors: Visa’s Zero Liability covers U.S.-issued cards and does not apply to commercial credit cards, or ATM transactions, or PIN transactions not processed by Visa. Notify your financial institution immediately of any fraudulent use. For specific restrictions, limitations and other details, see cardholder agreement or www.visa.com/security.