



# Counterfeit Fraud

## WHAT VISA® CARDHOLDERS NEED TO KNOW

At Visa, we strive to set the standard in credit card security. That's why Visa cards have a variety of built-in security features that make it hard for criminals to duplicate our credit cards.

### What is counterfeit fraud?

Despite the numerous safeguards Visa has built into its cards, some criminals have still managed to make copies of legitimate credit cards by copying or "skimming" the data contained in a card's magnetic stripe. Using this "skimmed" information, criminals manufacture phony or counterfeit cards and use them for fraudulent purposes.

### How is Visa helping to fight this type of fraud?

Protecting cardholder information is our top priority. To help guard against card fraud, Visa has developed a number of anti-fraud detection systems and programs:

**Visa Chip cards:** In Canada, new Visa cards have a microchip that works with a personal identification number (PIN). The microchip is embedded in your card and is virtually impossible to duplicate. The microchip works with your PIN instead of your signature for transaction verification. Chip cards work with Chip terminals at the point of sale and help to ensure a secure transaction.

**Neural Networks (24/7 Monitoring):** Through advances in technology Visa has developed very sophisticated statistical tools called neural networks which monitor purchase transactions for potential fraud 24 hours a day, seven days a week. These tools are designed to identify irregularities in spending behaviour, allowing Visa to quickly alert card issuers of possible fraud. With the neural networks system, cardholders can rest assured that Visa has their security top of mind.

**Account Information Security Program (AIS):** AIS is a global Visa program designed to help merchants make their virtual and physical environments more secure. AIS helps to provide assurance to cardholders that, if a merchant accepts Visa cards, the merchant measures up to Visa's strict security policies.

**Card Protection Features:** Every Visa card is equipped with a number of features designed to protect against the replication of Visa cards. These protection features include the Visa logo, microprinting, the reprint of the first four digits of the card number immediately below those same first four digits on the front of the card, and currently, your signature. Visa is continually updating its card protection features to protect our cardholders.

## Tips to help you fight counterfeit fraud:

- **Protect your cards as if they were cash** – don't leave them out in places where criminals can gain easy access to them.
- **Protect your PIN** – never write down your PIN, and never disclose your PIN to anyone. Choose a PIN that will be difficult to guess (e.g. avoid using initials, phone numbers, or birth dates).
- **Keep an eye on your card while it is being processed** – look out for cashiers who swipe your card through more than one card reader. This could be a sign that they are capturing the information on the magnetic stripe of your card for the purpose of making a counterfeit copy, a practice known as 'skimming'.
- **Ask questions** – If you notice that a cashier swiped your card through more than one card reader, ask why. There are some legitimate reasons for swiping cards through more than one card reader, such as the fact that a merchant's cash register is not connected to its point-of-sale authorization terminal. However, it is better to ask questions if you are concerned about a merchant's practices.
- **Ensure that you get your card back immediately after every purchase** – one of the easiest ways for thieves to obtain your credit card information is for them to steal your credit card.
- **Check your billing statement and verify the amounts of your purchases** – look for any transactions you don't recognize and report them immediately to your financial institution. This is where having receipts on file comes in handy.
- **Check your card when it is returned to you** – ensure the card you gave to the cashier is the same one you get back and that the card has not been altered in any way.
- **Sign the back of your new card as soon as you get it** – and destroy unwanted cards so no one else can use them.
- **Make a list of all your cards and their numbers and keep this list in a safe place** – this key information is helpful when reporting lost or stolen cards.
- **Report lost or stolen cards immediately to the financial institution that issued the card or to Visa** – the sooner your financial institution knows about a lost or stolen card, the sooner they can block the account.
- **Report suspected fraud to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre** – at **1-888-495-8501** or online at **[www.antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca](http://www.antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca)**.

Visit [www.visa.ca/securewithvisa](http://www.visa.ca/securewithvisa) for more information on counterfeit and other types of credit card fraud, and learn how you can play a role in protecting your cardholder information.

**RECOGNIZE IT. REPORT IT. STOP IT.**

