



EMV FAQs



Q. What is EMV?

A. EMV, which stands for Europay, MasterCard and Visa®, is a global standard of integrated circuit or chip card. EMV has been used for more than 12 years, beginning in Europe and then other countries. Specialized card terminals at merchants can accept the new card, sometimes referred to as smart cards. These card terminals are more secure than a standard swipe terminal that is common today.

Q. Why is the United States delayed in this technology?

A. Fraud losses caused by the creation of counterfeit cards have historically been less than the cost of moving to chip technologies. However, as more and more countries adopted these standards, criminals have turned to the United States to commit card fraud because the United States has the weakest systems comparatively. This is clearly evidenced by the large data breaches over the past couple of years. These breaches include: Target, Home Depot, Michaels, Staples and Heartland Payment Systems. Visa®, MasterCard and others have mandated the move to EMV over time.

Q. Where can I use my card?

A. An EMV card in the United States has a chip and a magnetic stripe. The card can be used at a chip-enabled terminal or a swipe terminal.

Q. Will the card work if the merchant doesn't have an EMV terminal?

A. Yes, the card will have both an EMV chip and the magnetic stripe. If the merchant does not have an EMV terminal, the card will be swiped, as currently happens. If the merchant has an EMV terminal, the terminal will recognize the presence of the chip and will use that technology to process the transaction. In non-chip enabled terminals, the card will be swiped and a signature will continue to be required for credit card transactions and a PIN for debit transactions. Magnetic stripe will co-exist with chip card technology to allow cardholders to use their cards at non-chip enabled terminals. Merchants control whether a card is routed through EMV or magnetic stripe. In the future, most transactions will not work without a chip card; however, this will be several years from now in the United States.

Q. Can I use my card in an ATM?

A. Since the card will have both a chip and a magnetic stripe, it should work in any ATM subject to the processing rules established by the ATM owner. Over the next several years, equipment including POS terminals and ATMs should be able to process both EMV and the traditional swipe cards. The terminals in most cases will try to use the most secure method to process a transaction which would be EMV. Centris ATMs will be upgraded in the future to utilize EMV chip technology. Until then, the ATMs will read the magnetic stripe on the card. The activation of EMV technology, when it occurs, will be seamless.

Q. Will my card be replaced when EMV is available?

A. Cards will be reissued based on expiration dates, and the new cards will contain EMV chip technology. Any reissues due to fraud or damage to the card will also result in an EMV card being issued. If Centris decides to re-issue cards outside of these parameters, cardholders will be notified ahead of time.

Q. Will EMV prevent fraud from occurring?

A. EMV will reduce fraud that is a result of stealing account numbers, making up a fraudulent number and then using it at a merchant. With EMV cards, the information on the chip is encrypted and virtually impossible to duplicate when trying to make a counterfeit card. While a magnetic stripe is considered secure, the chip feature is a higher level of security.

However, if the card number was stolen and transactions were done as “card not present” (meaning phone or internet initiated transactions), fraud can still occur. Cardholders are encouraged to register their cards with Verified by Visa® which adds another layer of security for phone and internet. For merchants that subscribe to this service, cardholders are required to enter a verification code that only they know as a secondary step to approve the transaction. This only works on sites where the merchant participates in the program.

Q. Will this chip card protect from data breaches in the future?

A. Because a chip card creates a one-time transaction code that is associated with a specific purchase authorization, the potential of fraud is reduced. However, it will not prevent a data breach by itself. If the full card number, expiration date and name are stolen, it can still be used to commit fraud in “card not present” transactions such as those done over the internet or phone.

Q. Does the chip card allow someone to track location?

A. No, the chip is not a locator system. It is limited to providing an authentication when it is used at a chip enabled terminal.

Q. There are other cards that use PayPass or PayWave technology where the user doesn't have to physically swipe the card or insert it into a terminal. Will Centris' chip card be similar?

A. No, Centris' chip cards are called contact cards. This means the cardholder must physically swipe the card or insert the card into a terminal to initiate a transaction.

Q. How do I use the new card?

A. Instead of swiping the card or inserting and removing; the cardholder will insert the card into the terminal and leave it inserted. The cardholder will then be prompted to enter a PIN or provide a signature. The terminal will tell the cardholder when it is safe to remove the card. If the merchant does not have a terminal equipped to read and process the chip, the cardholder simply swipes the card like normal.

Q. Are there additional fees that come with an EMV chip card?

A. No, there is no additional cost for the EMV chip card. Centris' existing fee schedule applies to the chip card for replacement other than in fraud situations or at the card's expiration.

Q. Do I need a PIN to make a purchase with my card?

A. Use of a PIN with an EMV debit and credit card will be the same as currently being used with a magnetic stripe card. Depending on the merchant, a PIN or signature may be required. Please note that a PIN is needed to make a cash advance at an ATM on your credit card.

Q. Are there cases internationally where my card will not work?

A. If the cardholder is traveling outside the United States, he/she may encounter some self-service terminals (like at a gas station) that will prompt him/her for, and require a PIN. This is different than the PIN issued with your credit card which is only used when making a cash advance. The systems outside of the United States have different processing technologies. If the cardholder runs into this situation, he/she needs to locate an attended terminal to perform the transaction. This would be like selecting the “pay inside” option at a gas station. It is recommended to be prepared with alternate payment methods such as local currency when traveling outside the United States.

