

## Merchant Options for Reducing Cardholder Interaction During COVID-19

Global | Acquirers, Issuers, Processors, Agents

Visa Network



**Overview:** Visa is reminding merchants about available options that are strongly recommended to reduce the need for cardholders to interact physically with POS terminals.

As the global outbreak of COVID-19 continues to evolve, merchants are facing challenges responding to the changing needs and concerns of customers and communities. One of the key points of focus is reducing the need for customers to interact physically with POS terminals; Visa is urging Acquirers and their Agents to remind merchants about options that are available, and strongly recommended, to reduce unnecessary interaction.

### Tap to Pay

Merchants leveraging tap to pay, or contactless, technology, which uses short-range wireless technology to make a secure payment between a contactless card or payment-enabled device and a checkout terminal, can offer customers a fast, easy, safe and secure payment experience at checkout. Tapping to pay allows customers to pay with their contactless-enabled cards or payment-enabled devices, thereby reducing the physical interaction with the POS terminal.

Merchants that have already enabled tap to pay may encourage consumers to pay with a tap to reduce exposure for their employees and customers to each other. Merchants must also ensure that contactless POS terminals be positioned in a customer-facing orientation and within easy reach of the customer, in order to enable a contactless transaction without the need for the merchant's staff to handle the customer's card.

Merchants interested in placing additional signage to advise their customers of contactless options can order tap to pay materials from the [Merchant Signage](#) site (available in applicable markets) at no cost. For merchants that have not yet enabled contactless payments but would like more information about how tap to pay can help their business, Visa has several resources available (specific links are included in the "Additional Resources" section below).

Issuers may see a growth in tap to pay transactions from more merchants, for varying transaction amounts, and should be ready to support the shift to contactless payments by ensuring that they approve as many transactions as possible. Issuers are reminded to evaluate each transaction based on the transaction's risk as a whole and are strongly recommended to take all available factors into account to not decline based *solely* on the lack of a cardholder verification method (CVM).

## Cardholder Verification

The Visa Easy Payment Service (VEPS) allows transactions up to specific amounts to be processed without a CVM (e.g., signature, PIN or consumer device cardholder verification method).<sup>1</sup> VEPS helps create a seamless checkout experience for cardholders and can be deployed to take advantage of options that eliminate the need for POS terminals to capture a CVM, thus reducing the need for customers to touch POS terminals.

Additionally, in 2018, Visa removed the need to capture and validate a signature for merchants that have deployed EMV® chip technology; the change applies to transactions via all interfaces at EMV-capable devices (i.e., tap, dip and swipe), and is not limited by transaction amount. Along with that change, dispute rights tied directly to the lack of signature capture were also eliminated. EMV-capable merchants can quickly and easily implement a “No Signature” policy by suppressing or turning off the signature prompt in the payment application; no re-certification is required. Alternatively, merchants may choose to make no changes and simply ignore the signature prompt altogether.

<sup>1</sup> CVMs should only be captured above the merchant’s local VEPS limit for magnetic-stripe-only terminals, or for EMV-capable terminals where local law, regulation or market requirements specify (e.g., the Payment Services Directive 2 in Europe).

## Practices That Should Cease Immediately

There are some practices that some merchants employ for accepting payments that should cease immediately, not only as a response to COVID-19 to reduce merchant staff and cardholder interaction, but also as they are not permitted under the Visa Rules. These practices include:

- Capturing a cardholder verification value 2 (CVV2) for card-present / face-to-face transactions
- Requiring cardholders to produce identification as a condition of accepting a Visa payment product
- Any other practice that encourages the merchant’s staff to touch the customer’s card(s)

## Additional Options for Reducing Cardholder Interaction

There may be other reasons customers are prompted to physically interact with POS terminals, which merchants could address by other means; these practices should be reconsidered during COVID-19 and re-established after. Some examples include:

### Payment-Related Practices

- Confirming the transaction amount; this is not a Visa requirement and has no impact on transaction processing or disputes
- Transaction receipts are only required for a subset of specific transactions, or if the customer specifically requests; transaction receipts may also be provided electronically (Visa Rules ID#: 0027835)

### Customer Relationship & Loyalty

- Entering the customer’s phone number / email address for loyalty purposes could be captured verbally, without requiring the customer to “key in” the information

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## For More Information

Merchants and third party agents should contact their acquirer.

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