

From: Nek07@aol.com on 06/22/2004 11:00:58 PM

Subject: Debit Card Fees

My comments relate to specific point of sale transactions made at a retail pharmacy where I work and their implications to both customers and myself. I have already communicated my concerns to the manager of my store.

I read an article about DOCKET NO. OP-1196 online which provided the e-mail address to which I am writing.

I am writing from the perspective of a clerk who is concerned about both service to customers and ethics.

I realize that there is a bewildering array of debit keypads at various retail and banking outlets, but I will confine my comments to the one I deal with and a recent test change made in its message to customers.

For most of the last three years the debit keypad facing the customer offered a choice of credit, debit, or ATM.

I noticed that when some customers pushed " CREDIT " they received a message "DO YOU WISH TO USE YOUR PIN NUMBER" followed by " YES" or "NO." To be honest I never knew exactly why this question was asked and so didn't have a ready answer for customers who asked about it. I guessed that maybe it was just a double-check of customers' intentions.

In the last several weeks there has been a test change in the message generated on the debit keypad that faces the customer. Now when some customers push "CREDIT" they no longer see the question asked above with the "yes" or "no" choice. They see two commands. "TYPE YOUR PIN NUMBER" and "PRESS ENTER".

I consider this misleading. I see a big difference between a command and a request.

On the screen on the register which I, but not the customer, can see it says at the same time the customer sees "type your pin" and "press enter" on their screen "PREE CLEAR FOR CREDIT." I am uncomfortable about the responsibility for confirming the choice of "credit" the customer has already made when the customer is faced with two commands which may, or may not, accomplish their true intentions if they follow the directions placed in front of them. I am particularly uncomfortable that so many of our customers are elderly and trusting.

I am afraid that after they push "CREDIT" to start their transaction that they will follow subsequent directions, not questions, mistakenly believing they are simply completing the steps necessary to complete a credit card transaction. There are many persons, old and young, who are UNaware that you do NOT enter a pin number for a credit card transaction.

There is a note from corporate near the register saying our store was chosen for this "enhancement" on a test basis. It directs the clerk to press the "clear" for credit message that only the clerk can see on the screen the customer can't see at the same time the customer is faced with "type you pin number" and "press enter" on the screen the clerk can not see.

It is unclear to me why corporate considers this an 'enhancement.' My feeling is that a SMALL (I REPEAT SMALL) warning label should be placed near the debit keypads facing customers saying "IF YOU USE YOUR PIN NUMBER YOU MAY BE CHARGED A FEE BY YOUR FINANCIAL INSTITUTION. CONTACT YOUR FINANCIAL INSTITUTION FOR MORE DETAILS."

That's all the more complicated, for the customer, that it needs to be.

It is clear to me that costs of processing all kinds and credit and debit transactions will be incurred and that both retailers and financial institutions will do everything in their power to pass those costs on to the consumers.

I believe it is your job to make sure that those costs are not passed on by misleading messages appearing on debit keypads facing customers and that customers are fully aware that entering pin numbers may incur additional costs.

Sincerely,

Ken Hollar
1102 FRY AVENUE
HAGERSTOWN, MD 21742

301-797-9071

Nek07@aol.com