

Introduction of the LINX / VISA Debit Chip Card



Overview

In January 2016 InfoLink Services Limited (ISL), the LINX debit card switch operator, began to take action against the fraud that had been occurring and was continuing to grow in the Trinidad and Tobago market place. *Fraud as “wrongful or criminal deception intended to result in financial or personal gain”*¹ For Debit card fraud to occur the fraudster must have two things

- 1) the information on the back of your debit card and
- 2) your secure PIN number which is entered on the key pad.

Fraudsters attach devices within the ATM slot to copy (skim) the information on the magnetic stripe on the back of the debit card when it is inserted, or discreetly swipe your card through a small hand device when your card is out of sight if using a point of sale device. Places where this can happen would be behind tinted cashier glass, at restaurants etc.

For the PIN, the Fraudster captures your PIN number either with a camera strategically placed at the ATM or by shoulder surfing if you don't cover the pin pad when you enter your pin.

The information is then copied onto fake “white” cards and the fraudster uses the card to withdraw cash at the ATMs using the fake card with your information on it and your PIN.

Debit card fraud vs Credit card fraud

Debit card fraud is different from credit card fraud because with a debit card the money stolen by the fraudster is your money from your chequing or savings account, whereas with a credit card the money is really a loan and belongs to the bank.

So if fraud occurs on your debit card the onus is on the cardholder to prove that the fraud did occur. This involves letting your bank know, reporting the issue to the fraud squad and following through with your bank as required. This can take some time as both the bank and the fraud squad have to investigate.

¹ The Webster Dictionary

To combat debit card fraud, ISL agreed that the LINX network and all LINX debit cards must go the EMV (chip card) route for security at the POS and ATMs. Due to the seriousness of the fraud in the local market, ISL got together with VISA to use their chip technology on the LINX cards in the local market. The new LINX debit chip card is a co-branded LINX /VISA debit card with the VISA logo on the front and the LINX logo on the back of the card as seen below.



The Secure Chip = Faster + Easier

This card can be used internationally, locally or both dependant on the bank that is issuing the card. When the LINX card is used throughout Trinidad and Tobago the LINX fees will apply. If used for online purchases or internationally, as allowed by the issuing bank, the VISA % based fees will apply. Further *Contactless* or *Tap and Go* capability on these chip cards is expected to be rolled out by the end of 2020.

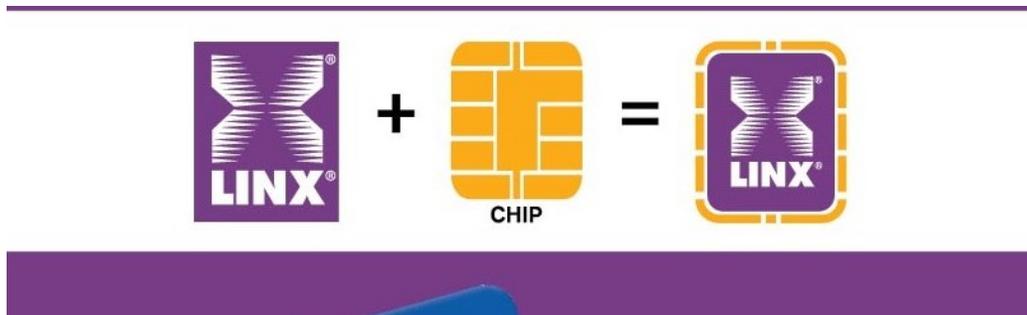
What is chip technology and How does the chip technology work?

Chip and PIN technology has been around since 1984, when French banks began testing chip-based cards. In 1996, the world's leading credit card companies collaborated to create a new, more secure standard based on the French technology In the industry, chip and PIN cards are called EMV cards, an acronym standing for Europay, MasterCard and Visa, the three credit card companies that developed the first international technological specifications for chip and PIN cards.²

Chip and PIN LINX VISA debit cards represent a significant technological upgrade to the traditional magnetic stripe LINX debit cards. Instead of embedding card numbers and card holder information in a magnetic stripe, all data is contained within a tiny computer chip built into the card.

² [source: [EMVCo](#)].

When the LINX VISA chip debit card is inserted, data flows between the card **chip** and the issuing financial institution (your bank) to verify the card's legitimacy and create the unique transaction data.



Once the card is verified by your bank you will be asked to enter your PIN. As previously with the magnetic stripe LINX card, it is critical that you keep your PIN secure and confidential.

Why is the chip safer than the magnetic stripe?

Fraudsters cannot copy the chip information however if you use an ATM or POS device which accesses your magnetic stripe which still exists on the back of your card, your card is still vulnerable for fraud.

Therefore until all ATMs and POS devices and all LINX debit cards are chip only, there is still the window for fraud or copying card information.

Trinidad and Tobago EMV status

In Trinidad and Tobago, as at March 2020, all ATMs and Point of Sale devices are EMV (Chip and Pin) enabled however not all bank cards in Trinidad and Tobago carry chips as yet. Banks that utilize the LINX network are working towards issuing the new LINX VISA chip cards within 2020 and 2021.

Article submitted by InfoLink Services Limited (ISL),

March 2020