

How to stop mystery credit card fees

When you have a credit card, keeping track of account charges is an important part of managing your financial life.

As you monitor your credit card purchases, refunds, and other transactions you make, be sure to watch for fees and other charges that might appear.

When activating a new credit card, watch for “the pitch”

When you call to activate a new credit card, or at other times you call your credit card company, you may be routed to representatives who try to sell you things called credit protection, identity monitoring, or identity theft protection. These services, or “add-on products,” are additional, optional services that cost you money.

Keep in mind that you don’t have to buy anything extra from the credit card company. In some cases, the sales tactics might be high-pressure and confusing.

When you’re deciding whether you want add-on products, ask yourself:

- Do you have enough information about the product to buy it?
- Is the cost worth the possible benefit?
- Do you understand whether you are eligible for the benefits of the product?

Get it in writing first

You can always wait to purchase add-on products until you review the terms, costs, and benefits in writing. When you ask for written information, be clear that you are not enrolling at that time and you intend to review the written information and then decide. This can help you evaluate “trial periods” as well. The terms of some trial periods allow the company to begin charging you for the product automatically at the end of the trial period, unless you call or write to the company.

Watch your statement for unfamiliar terms or fees

Even if you don’t recall signing up to buy an extra service, regularly check your credit card statement for anything unfamiliar, including “add-on,” optional, fee-based products.

If you find unfamiliar charges, you can cancel

Call your credit card provider using the number on the back of your card and ask to cancel products you do not want. You are not required to buy these optional products from your credit card provider. If you did not authorize these products, tell them. You may need to use the credit card company’s dispute process to make sure the charge is removed. You can also submit a complaint.

Submit a complaint

Have an issue with a financial product or service? We'll forward your complaint to the company and work to get you a response – generally within 15 days.



Online

consumerfinance.gov/complaint



By phone (180+ languages)

M-F, 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. ET

(855) 411-CFPB (2372)

(855) 729-CFPB (2372) TTY/TDD



By mail

P.O. Box 2900

Clinton, IA 52733-2900



By fax

(855) 237-2392

