

What is the difference between my balance and my available balance?

The account balance does not include outstanding debit purchases, checks or automatic drafts. Your available balance reflects any preauthorization holds or deposit holds and is used to determine available funds when future transactions attempt to clear the account. Fees may be assessed on your checking account based on your available balance at the time an item clears your account.

What is a debit card preauthorization hold?

When you use your debit card to conduct a credit transaction (non-PIN-based), the merchant sends us an amount, usually your purchase total, for preauthorization. This amount is placed on hold and removed from your available balance immediately. The hold is released after approximately 48 hours or when the transaction clears your account, whichever comes first. The hold helps reflect the most current available balance on your account through Internet Banking, mobile banking, automated teller system and at ATMs.

How do debit card preauthorization holds work?

Most members depend on the accuracy of their balances to help them avoid insufficient fund or overdraft fees. Debit card preauthorization holds allow members to view pending transactions and provide timely available balance information.

For example:

Chris needs to withdraw \$100 from an ATM. Prior to the withdrawal, he checks his balance and sees that only \$25 is available in his checking account. He doesn't realize his wife made a debit card signature-based purchase for \$75 from their joint account earlier in the day, which is why his available balance is now \$25.

If he chooses to proceed with the transaction and is opted-in to pay overdrafts for ATM and one-time (everyday) debit card transactions, the resulting balance in their account would be negative when the debit transaction clears the account. So, their overdraft is triggered, and Chris receives the requested funds from the ATM. Fees may apply.

If he chooses to proceed with the transaction, and is opted-out of overdraft for the debit card, the resulting balance in their account would be negative when the debit transaction clears the account, therefore the ATM transaction is denied for insufficient funds.

Will debit card preauthorization holds apply to all my purchases?

No, they only apply to debit card purchases that are non-PIN-based. Debit purchases and ATM withdrawals made using a PIN subtract the funds immediately from your account, thus reflecting an accurate available balance.

Please note: When using your PIN for fuel, the merchant may still send a preauthorization request.

Will the debit card preauthorization hold always equal the exact amount of my transaction?

No. Some merchants, especially gas stations, hotels, car rental companies and restaurants, will preauthorize an amount that is higher or lower than the actual purchase amount.

For example:

Gas stations: Many gas stations preauthorize transactions for amounts ranging from \$1 to \$100 because they do not know how much gas you will actually pump in advance of your transaction. If they preauthorize \$100, we will place a hold for \$100, even if your actual transaction is only \$50. After 2 hours, we will release the hold and those funds will be available to you again.

Hotels: When using a debit card to make reservations in advance, hotels generally will preauthorize an amount equal to an overnight stay, or more, depending on the length of your stay. This will result in a hold on your account up to 48 hours. Then, when you actually arrive, the hotel will place another preauthorization, often larger than the cost of your stay to cover possible incidental expenses. Because these can result in significant holds against your account, we recommend always using your ETPCU credit card for hotel reservations.

Car Rental Companies: When renting an automobile, most car rental companies will authorize an amount greater than the actual rental cost to cover any additional expenses.

Restaurants: Most restaurants authorize an amount that is slightly larger than the bill in the event that you include gratuity on your card transaction.

If a hold is placed on my account and then the transaction clears, is there a chance that the hold amount will be deducted again?

No. When merchants preauthorize an amount that is different from the final transaction total, there is a possibility that the hold and the transaction will not match, and the hold will not release when the transaction clears. If the transaction amount does not match the hold, the system will automatically release the hold on your account in 48 hours.

Do all debit card transactions clear within 48 hours?

No. Some merchants will not send the final transaction through to us within the 48-hour timeframe of the hold. In that case, the hold will drop off and funds will appear to be available again. However, the debit transaction still has to clear your account. Unfortunately, we have no control over how quickly merchants process their transactions.

How do I avoid preauthorization holds when using my debit card?

Enter your PIN for point-of-sale transactions whenever possible. Keep in mind, most PIN-based transactions clear your account immediately.

How do I opt in or out for the Credit Union to pay overdrafts for a one-time debit or ATM transaction?

You can [contact us](#) by phone to opt in or out of overdraft as it relates to paying one-time debit or ATM transaction with your debit card. You may also log on to Internet Banking and select the Additional Services tab.

Do preauthorization holds apply to my ETPCU credit card?

Yes. All non-ATM credit card transactions are subject to a 96 hour preauthorization hold.

How can I get more information regarding preauthorization holds?

For additional information, please [contact us](#).