

Commonwealth of Massachusetts ACH Frequently Asked Questions

What happens when I choose to pay using ACH instead of credit cards?

When you choose to pay by ACH, you authorize a debit to your checking or savings account. The Automated Clearing House (ACH) is a funds transfer system governed by the Rules of the National Automated Clearing House Association (NACHA), which provides for the interbank clearing of electronic entries for participating financial institutions.

How is ACH different from other payment methods?

ACH transactions are processed electronically between financial institutions through data transmission. ACH provides faster processing than paper checks by eliminating physical handling. ACH is more economical than credit cards, which may carry convenience fees and finance charges.

How does ACH work?

By entering the required banking information, you authorize a debit to your checking or savings account for the amount you specify, for a single occurrence.

Why should I use ACH?

Convenience. There is no check to write, no stamps to buy, and no credit card debt. You will receive a confirmation number and e-mail acknowledgment of your debit payment request immediately. The system is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, from your home or office.

Can I use either a personal or business account for an ACH transaction?

Yes. Check with your financial institution to ensure that the account does not have debit blocking, which prevents electronic debits.

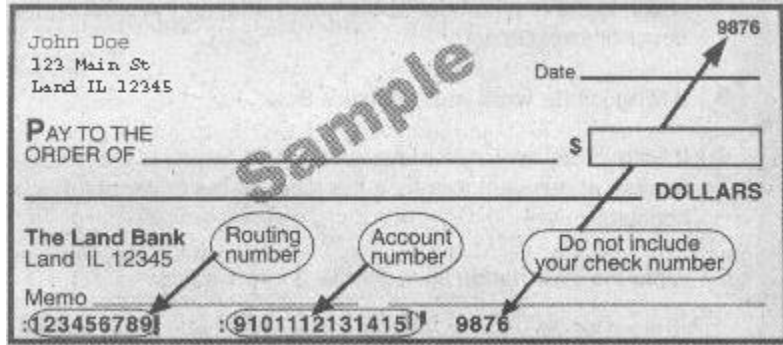
What information do I need to provide for an ACH transaction?

You provide your name, indication of personal or business account type, bank routing number, account number, and payment amount.

Where can I find my bank routing number?

Your bank routing number and bank account number can be found on the bottom of your check or deposit slip. Bank routing numbers are always 9 digits long. Account numbers may be up to 17 digits long – there is no specific number of characters for a bank account number. These numbers may appear in different order on your check. Some financial institutions list the routing number first on the check, while other financial institutions list the account number first. We do not need your check number.

Here is an example of where you can find this information on your checks:



Do I need to notify my bank that I am paying by ACH?

Please check with your financial institution to make sure that the account is "ACH enabled" or that "debit blocking is removed" so that the debit to your account can be processed.

How do I know the ACH transaction was successfully processed?

After submitting your payment, you will receive confirmation indicating that your request for payment was accepted. Retain or print this important information until the transaction is processed and settled. In addition, the confirmation number, contact information and an acknowledgment will be sent to the email address you entered as part of the payment transaction. Finally, the ACH transaction will appear on your bank statement once settlement occurs.

How will the ACH transaction appear on my bank statement?

An abbreviation for the processor, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and/or the department name will appear on your bank statement with the amount of the transaction. It will take up to three (3) business days for the ACH transaction to post to your account. High dollar ACH transactions over \$15,000.00 may take up to eight (8) business days to settle.

Whom can I contact for questions or follow-up?

Please contact the Commonwealth of Massachusetts department you are paying during normal business hours. The Commonwealth's business days are Monday through Friday. Holidays and emergencies are not included, and keep in mind that the pandemic has impacted state workers and many are working remotely. Contact information is provided on your statement, invoice, or renewal, or on the department's web site and payment web site. Additionally, contact information is provided to you in the confirmation email you will receive after your transaction is completed.

Is there any risk of an unauthorized access to my private financial banking information?

The Commonwealth is committed to protecting your personal data. The Commonwealth's electronic payment applications are hosted by third party Payment Solutions providers that utilize both logical and physical security controls and are compliant with the Payment Card Industry (PCI) Data Security Standard (DSS).

What can I do to protect my personal and banking information?

As a consumer, you can take the common sense approach to protecting your information:

- Never share personal or online account information such as user names and passwords with others.
- Never conduct financial business over unsecured public Wi-Fi.
- Never include sensitive information in emails. Emails are not secure.
- Shred documents with personal information such as preapproved credit card offers, bank receipts, etc.
- Maintain and regularly update virus protection and anti-spyware programs on your computer and cell phone.
- Do not respond to suspicious emails, especially if they request personal information or ask you to validate your account information.
- Periodically monitor your credit reports to ensure accuracy.

What happens if there are insufficient funds in my checking account?

If there are insufficient funds in your account, this item will be processed the same way as a bounced check -- the Commonwealth will initiate collections proceedings to recover these funds from you, in addition to any insufficient funds penalties. You will be prohibited from using ACH for subsequent payments and must choose another payment method. Your financial institution will notify you and may charge a returned check fee.

How are ACH credits handled? What if I entered the wrong amount?

Contact the Commonwealth of Massachusetts department you are paying to request a void or refund. You will be asked for information contained in your confirmation email to reference the transaction, so be sure to keep this important information.

Sources:

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXXII/Chapter167B/Section18>

<https://www.law.cornell.edu/ucc/4A>

<https://www.federalreserve.gov/boarddocs/supmanual/cch/effa.pdf>

<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/topics/privacy-identity-online-security>

<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/feature-0014-identity-theft>

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