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# Card surcharging reforms: net settlement and trust account changes. Partner messaging & FAQ guide

## Purpose

This guide has been developed to help our software partners communicate consistently and confidently with their customers about the upcoming card surcharge changes and understand related operational changes that may affect some shared Global Payments merchants from 1 October 2026.

Use this guide alongside the information provided on our RBA Reform Resource Hub and our merchant resources to help inform your customers about the changes.

## What is changing?

From 1 October 2026, businesses in Australia will no longer be permitted to apply a surcharge to Visa, Mastercard or eftpos card payments.

While the Reserve Bank of Australia's (RBA) reforms apply to Visa, Mastercard and eftpos payments, American Express has separately announced that surcharging on Amex card transactions will also end from 1 October 2026.

These changes apply across Australia and are not specific to any one payment provider.

**Importantly, payment fees aren't disappearing.**

Businesses will continue to incur payment processing costs when customers pay by card. The key change is that these costs can no longer be recovered through a separate card surcharge.

For some merchants, the end of card surcharging will also change how applicable card transaction fees are collected and how settlement amounts appear. These are operational changes associated with the transition and should not be described as a separate RBA requirement.

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## What has changed from 1 July 2026?

As part of our phased transition to the new industry requirements from:

- 1 July 2026, newly onboarded merchants were no longer supported to apply card surcharging. This change was implemented within Global Payments systems and payment workflows to help reduce disruption ahead of the broader industry changes taking effect on 1 October 2026.
- Existing merchants who currently surcharge were not affected by the 1 July operational change and have continued to receive guidance and support as we approach the October implementation date.

## What is changing for some Global Payments merchants from 1 October 2026?

Some shared merchants currently recover applicable card transaction fees from their customers through surcharging and are receiving settlement based on the gross value of the card payments processed.

From 1 October 2026, applicable card transaction fees that are currently passed to customers will instead be payable by the merchant and deducted from funds collected before settlement.

This means:

- Transaction reporting will continue to show the full value of card payments processed.
- The amount deposited into the merchant's bank account will be net applicable transaction fees.
- Settlement amounts may therefore no longer match the gross transaction values shown in transaction reporting.

This is a change to how card transaction fees are handled. It does not change how the merchant accepts or processes payments.

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## What could this look like?

For example, if a merchant processes $1,000 in card payments and the applicable transaction fee is 2%:

**Before 1 October 2026**

- Gross card payments processed: $1,000
- Transaction fees: paid by customers
- Settlement received: $1,000

**From 1 October 2026**

- Gross card payments processed: $1,000
- Transaction fees: $20 (2%)
- Settlement received: $980

*Illustrative example only. Actual fees depend on the merchant's account configuration.*

## What does the settlement change mean for software partners?

We have contacted impacted Global Payments merchants directly to help them prepare for this change.

Software partners should review whether any functionality, integrations or workflows within their software rely on settlement amounts matching gross transaction values.

This may include:

- Reconciliation and accounting processes
- Debtor management workflows
- Automated integrations
- Reporting that uses settlement values

If your software does not rely on settlement values in this way, no changes may be required.

Shared merchants may contact you with questions about how the settlement change affects reconciliation or workflows within your software. Questions about the merchant's

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Global Payments account, fees or settlement arrangements should be directed to client support or your Partner Manager as appropriate.

## What about merchants using trust accounts?

As part of preparations for the surcharge changes, we are also reviewing settlement and billing arrangements for merchants whose accounts may require attention because:

- Their settlement account may be a trust account
- Their billing account may be a trust account; and/or
- Global Payments may not hold a valid account for the collection of applicable transaction fees.

Trust account regulations may restrict card transaction fees from being paid from a trust account. Affected merchants are being contacted directly and asked to confirm their settlement and billing arrangements before 1 October 2026.

If a merchant tells you they have received this notice, you don't need to advise them on trust account compliance or recommend how their accounts should be configured. Direct them to Global Payments Client Support, who can review their individual settlement and billing arrangements.

If the merchant's settlement or billing account is not a trust account and their account details are current, the communication advises that no action is required.

## Talking to merchants

When discussing the reforms with merchants, keep your messaging simple, clear, and consistent.

We recommend focusing on these key messages:

1. Payment fees aren't disappearing. Businesses will continue to incur payment processing costs when customers pay by card.
2. From 1 October 2026, businesses will no longer be permitted to apply a surcharge to Visa, Mastercard, eftpos or American Express (Amex) card payments. This is an industry-wide change, regardless of who their payment provider is.

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3. For some affected Global Payments merchants, applicable card transaction fees will be deducted before settlement from 1 October. Their gross transaction values and transaction reporting will continue to show the full payment amount, but the amount deposited into their bank account may be lower because applicable transaction fees have been deducted.
4. This settlement change does not apply in the same way to every merchant. Merchants should refer to any direct communication they've received about their account and contact Global Payments Client Support for account-specific questions.
5. Software partners should review whether their software or workflows rely on settlement values matching gross transaction values. If they don't, no changes may be required.

Some merchants may need to take action before 1 October, particularly where Global Payments has contacted them about settlement, billing or trust account arrangements.

The approach to managing payment costs will depend on each merchant's business model, customer base and payment costs.

If you're unsure how the reforms apply to a particular merchant, direct them to the RBA Reform Resource Hub or contact your Partner Manager before providing guidance.

## Updating your customer assets and collateral

For consistency, you should review and ensure all your customer facing assets and collateral referencing surcharging has been updated, including:

- Ensuring sales and customer-facing teams are aligned on how fees are positioned to new merchants, moving away from passing on card costs
- Customer-facing experiences like hosted payment pages should have all references to passing on card fees removed
- Marketing, product and sales collateral used when acquiring or onboarding new merchants, should no longer mention surcharging or fee pass-through
- Surcharging functionality is disabled to support compliance with the new rules from 1 October 2026
- Existing fee-free or surcharge-based arrangements are reviewed where required

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- Merchant agreements, onboarding journeys and customer communications are reviewed to determine whether updates are required
- Any software functionality, integrations or workflows that use settlement values are reviewed to determine whether they assume settlement will equal the gross transaction value
- Customer-facing teams understand that gross transaction reporting may remain unchanged even where the amount deposited into an affected merchant's account is lower
- Support teams know where to refer merchants with account-specific questions about settlement, transaction fees, billing accounts or trust accounts.

## What should I avoid saying when talking to customers?

Every business is different, and the impact of these reforms will vary depending on individual circumstances.

Avoid statements like:

"Payment fees are disappearing."

"Your costs will definitely go down."

"You'll need to increase your prices."

"Changing payment providers will avoid these changes."

"Global Payments will automatically handle everything."

"Nothing will change for your business."

“Global Payments has provided legal advice.”

“You can continue paying card transaction fees from your trust account.”

Account-specific settlement, billing, trust account and pricing questions should be referred to the Global Payments Client Support team.

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## What have our merchants already been told?

Merchants have already been emailed to communicate that:

- Payment processing fees will continue to apply
- From 1 October 2026, businesses will no longer be permitted to apply a surcharge to Visa, Mastercard, eftpos or American Express (Amex) card payments
- No immediate action is required today
- Businesses should begin understanding whether they currently apply a surcharge
- Businesses should begin understanding how much surcharge revenue they currently receive
- Businesses should review how payment costs are currently managed within their business.

Merchants affected by the settlement change have also been advised that:

- Applicable card transaction fees currently passed to customers will instead be payable by the business
- Those applicable fees will be deducted from funds collected before settlement
- Gross transaction values and transaction reporting will continue to show the full payment amount
- The amount deposited into their bank account will therefore be lower than the gross value of card payments processed
- They should review reconciliation, accounting, debtor management and any automated software or ERP integrations that use settlement amounts
- They may wish to speak with their software provider where their reconciliation process relies on settlement information

A separate targeted communication has been sent to Global Payments merchants whose settlement or billing arrangements may involve a trust account or where Global Payments may not hold a valid account for transaction fee collection. These merchants are being asked to contact Global Payments Client Support if action may be required.

Merchants have also been directed to:

- The RBA Reform Resource Hub
- Card surcharge changes explained: What businesses need to know

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# Frequently asked merchant questions and proposed answers

- ## Does this mean payment fees disappear?

  No. Businesses will continue to incur payment processing costs when customers pay by card.
  The reforms relate to surcharging (passing the cost to customers), not the underlying costs of accepting card payments.

- ## Does this affect direct debit payments from bank accounts?

  No. These changes apply to card payments only and do not affect direct debit payments from bank accounts.

- ## How do I know if I currently apply a surcharge?

  A merchant may currently be applying a surcharge if:

  - Customers see an additional charge when paying by card
  - A surcharge appears on customer receipts
  - Their payment terminal automatically adds a fee to card transactions
  - Their software platform is configured to apply a surcharge.

  Merchants may also find information about their surcharging arrangements or payment fees in their agreement with their payment service provider.

- ## Do I need to change my prices?

  Every business is different.

  Businesses should consider their own circumstances when deciding how to manage payment costs following the end of surcharging. The right approach will depend on their business model, customer base and payment costs. Businesses may wish to seek advice from their accountant or business advisor.

- ## What is net settlement?

  Net settlement means applicable transaction fees are deducted from the funds collected before the remaining amount is deposited into the merchant's bank account.

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For affected Global Payments merchants from 1 October 2026, transaction reporting will continue to show the full value of card payments processed, but their settlement amount will be net of applicable card transaction fees.

- **Why is my settlement amount lower from 1 October?**

  If you currently recover applicable card transaction fees from customers through surcharging, those fees will instead be payable by your business from 1 October 2026.

  For affected Global Payments merchants, applicable transaction fees will be deducted before settlement. This means the amount deposited into your bank account may be lower than the gross value of card payments processed.

- **Does a lower settlement mean I processed less money?**

  No. This is a change to how applicable card transaction fees are handled, not a change to how payments are accepted or processed. Gross transaction values and transaction reporting will continue to show the full payment amount.

- **What should merchants do now?**

  All merchants should continue preparing for the end of card surcharging from 1 October 2026.

  Merchants should:

  - Understand whether they currently apply a surcharge
  - Understand how much surcharge revenue they currently receive
  - Review how payment costs are currently managed within their business
  - Review any direct communications received from Global Payments about settlement or billing changes
  - Where relevant, review reconciliation and accounting processes
  - Review debtor management workflows
  - Check automated software or ERP integrations that use settlement amounts
  - Contact Global Payments Client Support if advised that their trust account, billing account or settlement arrangements may require attention.
  - Stay informed as additional guidance becomes available.

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## Key dates

| Date | What is happening |
|---|---|
| **1 July 2026** | Newly onboarded merchants are no longer supported to apply card surcharging. |
| **June–September 2026** | Education and preparation. Global Payments will continue providing resources and guidance to support partners and merchants. |
| **1 October 2026** | Businesses will no longer be permitted to apply a surcharge to Visa, Mastercard or eftpos card payments under the RBA reforms. American Express has separately announced that surcharging on Amex card transactions will also end from this date. |

## Before responding to merchant questions

We recommend you:

- Review this Card surcharging reforms, settlement and trust account changes: Partner messaging & FAQ guide
- Read the merchant guide 'Card surcharge changes explained: What businesses need to know'
- Direct merchants to the RBA Reform Resource Hub for the latest information and resources
- Use the approved messaging to help ensure merchants receive clear and consistent information
- Check whether a question relates to the general surcharge reforms or to a merchant's individual settlement/billing arrangements before responding
- Do not assume that every merchant has the same settlement configuration
- Direct Global Payments account, settlement, billing or trust account questions to Global Payments Client Support
- Contact your Partner Manager if you're unsure how the reforms apply to a particular merchant or scenario

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# Resources

## Available now

- Card surcharging reforms, settlement and trust account changes: Partner messaging and FAQ guide (this PDF)
- RBA Reform Resource Hub
- Card surcharge changes explained: What businesses need to know