

Verizon Wireless to charge \$2 for one-time payment (Update)

December 29 2011, By PETER SVENSSON , AP Technology Writer

Verizon Wireless, the country's largest cellphone company, said Thursday that it will start charging \$2 for every payment subscribers make over the phone or online with their credit cards.

The company said this "convenience fee" will be introduced Jan. 15.

The fee won't apply to electronic check payments or to automatic credit card payments set up through Verizon's AutoPay system. Paying by credit card in a Verizon store will also be free, as will mailing a check.

Other carriers have tried to get subscribers to move to automatic payments through other means. AT&T Inc. offers a \$10 gift card for those who set up AutoPay. Sprint Nextel Corp. charges subscribers who have caps on the fees they can rack up each month. Those people are charged \$5 monthly unless they set up automatic payments.

It's not uncommon for utilities, universities and even state tax departments to charge convenience fees for online payments. Each credit-card payment comes with fees that the companies can avoid by getting electronic checks instead. Automatic payments mean less trouble for companies in going after late payments.

Verizon Communications Inc., the landline phone company that owns most of Verizon Wireless, tried last year to introduce a \$3.50 fee for people who paid their bill for FiOS TV or Internet service month-to-month by credit card. It backed off after complaints.

Verizon Wireless serves 91 million phones and other devices on accounts that pay the company directly, and more who pay indirectly through other companies.

More information: Verizon statement:

<http://news.verizonwireless.com/news/2011/12/pr2011-12-29b.html>

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