NorthStar

WHITE PAPER

Make way for tap. Payments after EMV.

Chip cards won the fraud fight at the counter. Now guests pay with a tap of a card, a phone or a watch. Here is what EMV changed, who pays when fraud gets through, and what your terminals, POS and team need to take every kind of payment, everywhere guests pay.

97%

OF CARD TRANSACTIONS WORLDWIDE RUN ON CHIP

EMVCo, Q4 2025

~3x

RISE IN LOST OR STOLEN CARD FRAUD ON MAJOR U.S. NETWORKS

Kansas City Fed, 2015 to 2021

~70%

OF VISA IN-PERSON U.S. PAYMENTS ARE TAP

Visa, January 2026

80%+

OF VISA IN-PERSON PAYMENTS WORLDWIDE ARE TAP

Visa, January 2026

INSIDE

Make Way for Tap: A Smarter Payment Strategy for Restaurants

01 Where EMV landed

02 Who pays for fraud

03 Swipe, dip or tap

04 What your hardware needs

05 Getting the front line ready

06 What it does for your business

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chip is the standard. Tap is the expectation.

When the chip card arrived in the U.S., restaurants had to rethink their terminals, their processing and their checkout flow. That shift is done. EMV chip is now the standard, and 97% of card transactions worldwide run on it.[1]

The next shift is already here. Guests tap a card, a phone or a watch, and they expect it to work at the counter, the kiosk and the table. That takes readers that handle every method, a POS that runs them everywhere, and staff who know the drill.

01 WHERE EMV LANDED

The chip helped. Fraud didn't go away.

EMV, named for founders Europay, Mastercard and Visa, is the global standard for chip payment cards. A magnetic stripe holds the same static data every time it's swiped, so a copied stripe works like the real card. A chip generates **unique data for every transaction**, so stolen data can't be replayed to make a counterfeit.

Early results were strong. Visa reported that counterfeit fraud dollars at U.S. merchants with chip acceptance fell **76%** from September 2015 to December 2018.[2]

Then fraud found the gaps. A 2025 Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City study found card-present fraud rates on the major U.S. networks climbed again from 2017 to 2021. Lost or stolen card fraud **nearly tripled**, and merchants carried a growing share of the losses.[3]

That's why chip is the starting line, not the finish. Tap, wallets, encryption and a clean network cover what the chip doesn't. Our companion paper, **Network Security Best Practices for Restaurant Payments**, covers those layers.

FROM SWIPE TO TAP

1970s

The magnetic stripe becomes the standard way to read a card. Static data, easy to copy.

Oct 2015

The U.S. liability shift takes effect. Merchants without chip acceptance carry counterfeit fraud losses.

2017 to 2021

Card-present fraud climbs back. Lost or stolen card fraud nearly triples.[3]

Today

Tap nears 70% of Visa's in-person U.S. payments and tops 80% worldwide. Swipe is the fallback, and the risk.[4]

02 WHO PAYS FOR FRAUD

The liability shift still decides who eats the loss.

No law requires a restaurant to accept chip cards. The card brands made it a money decision instead. Since October 1, 2015, when a counterfeit card is used in person, the loss falls on whichever party is least EMV-capable: the bank that issued the card, or the merchant that took it.

SWIPE ONLY

Chip card issued by the bank → **Swipe terminal** no chip acceptance → **Counterfeit** charge disputed

⊗ The restaurant absorbs the loss

CHIP AND TAP READY

Chip card issued by the bank → **EMV terminal** dip or tap → **Counterfeit** charge disputed

✓ Liability stays with the issuer

The exposure today hides in the corners: a backup terminal in the office, an old handheld on the patio, a pop-up or catering setup that only swipes. **Every place you take a card needs to read the chip.**

03 SWIPE, DIP OR TAP

Three ways to read a card. Only one is fast and safe.

	SWIPE	DIP	TAP
How it reads	Magnetic stripe	Chip, inserted into the reader	Chip or wallet, held near the reader
Card data	Static, the same every time	Unique for each transaction	Unique for each transaction; wallets add tokenization
Counterfeit risk	HIGH	LOW	LOW
At checkout	Quick, but the least secure	Card stays in the reader until approved	Fastest; the card never leaves the guest's hand
Phones and watches	No	No	Yes: Apple Pay, Google Pay, Samsung Pay

04 WHAT YOUR HARDWARE NEEDS

Take every payment, everywhere guests pay.

Start by counting every place a card changes hands: registers, kiosks, the drive-thru window, the bar, the patio, catering. Then make sure each one checks these boxes.

Dual-interface readers

Every reader should take both dip and tap. Swipe stays only as a last resort.

Mobile wallets

NFC acceptance for phones and watches, with the same flow as a contactless card.

Pay at the table

Handheld readers bring the terminal to the guest, so the card never leaves their sight.

Kiosk and drive-thru

Self-order and window lanes need the same chip and tap acceptance as the counter.

Encryption built in

Pair EMV with point-to-point encryption and tokenization to protect data after the read.

One platform

Every lane on the same POS and processor, so reporting, tips and settlement match.

Terminals have to be certified with your processor, so bring your POS provider and processor into the same conversation before you buy.

05 GETTING THE FRONT LINE READY

New hardware only works if the team uses it right.

01 **Offer tap first**

It's the fastest option and the card stays in the guest's hand.

02 **Leave the chip in**

Coach guests to keep the card inserted until the reader says it's done.

03 **Don't default to swipe**

If a chip read fails, retry before falling back. Frequent fallback is a red flag.

04 **Answer "is this safe?"**

Staff should be able to explain, in one line, why chip and tap protect the guest.

Tap first

THE NEW DEFAULT AT CHECKOUT

Faster lines, fewer hands on the card and the same chip-level security. **Make it the first thing your team offers.**

06 WHAT IT DOES FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Safer for guests. Faster for you.

- **Fewer counterfeit chargebacks.** Chip and tap make copied cards far harder to use, and the liability shift keeps those losses off your books.
- **Faster lines and table turns.** Tap is the quickest way to close a check, at the counter or the table.
- **Ready for how guests pay.** Cards, phones and watches all work, with no extra step for staff.
- **Guest confidence.** When the card never leaves their hand, guests don't have to wonder where it went.
- **Less card data in your systems.** Wallets and tokenization mean fewer real card numbers to protect.
- **Cleaner end of day.** Every lane on one POS and one processor means totals that match.

HOW NORTHSTAR HANDLES IT

NorthStar Order Entry and NorthStar Payments support EMV chip, contactless and mobile wallet payments on one platform, at the counter, the kiosk and the table, with tokenization and point-to-point encryption protecting card data from the moment it's read.

SOURCES

1. EMVCo, Worldwide EMV Deployment Statistics, twelve months reported as of Q4 2025.
2. Visa, U.S. counterfeit fraud at chip-enabled merchants, September 2015 vs. December 2018, via PYMNTS, 2019.
3. Fumiko Hayashi, "Did Card-Present Fraud Rates Decline in the United States After the Migration to Chip Cards?" Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, February 12, 2025. Figures for dual-message networks.
4. Visa fiscal Q1 2026 earnings call, January 2026, via PYMNTS, January 29, 2026.

NorthStar

TALK TO OUR TEAM

Every way guests pay, on one POS.

CBS NorthStar is a restaurant POS and order-management platform built for QSR and full-service operators: iPad-based Order Entry POS, payments, kiosk, customer-facing display, loyalty integrations and third-party delivery on one platform, backed by hands-on rollout and support since 1994.

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