

■ PLASTIC MONEY

If you lose your cards

Loss of wallet and your cards can hobble you, especially if you are abroad on business. A new service promises to tackle your worries

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WITH NEWER technologies intruding into our lives, paper currency is fast being replaced by plastic money in our wallets. Industry estimates show that on an average urban Indians use three cards. These could be debit, credit, loyalty, or discount cards. However, this ease of carrying lots of money brings in its wake a few concerns as well. In case of theft, a failure to report and get the cards blocked can prove disastrous.

Citibank in partnership with CPP Assistance Services, an assistance services marketing company, has launched a card protection plan (CPP) in India. This service offers several benefits like cancellation of all lost cards on your behalf, replacement assistance, emergency travel and hotel assistance.

Plan types

There are two plans on offer: classic and premium. Each plan has two sub-divisions: single or joint account. In case of add-on card holders, joint account is beneficial, as it acts as a repository for both the account holders. What differentiates the two plans from each other is the insurance cover provided on them.

Features

CARD PROTECTION. This feature saves you the hassle of making numerous phone calls to get your cards blocked in case of theft. After taking membership, all you need to do is get all your cards — credit, debit, or any other type — registered with the CPP Assistance Services. The call centre must be informed within 24 hours of the discovery of loss. They then get all the lost cards cancelled on your behalf. Thereafter, the customer service also shares the reference numbers and confirmation of card cancellation with you.

This service also provides pre- and post-notification insurance covers. For instance, suppose you lose your card on January 8, 2009, but discover it only on the 10th. In case there are transactions on the card in the interim, your loss will be covered by insurance (it has pre-defined limits). In this case, the insurance provides pre-notification cover of seven days and also a post notification cover (see table).

This facility works on reimbursement basis. The company claims to process all claims within 14 days of information received.

TRAVEL ASSISTANCE. This feature facilitates travel, hotel and cash assistance on refund basis in case of loss of money. In case of theft, if you have no means to arrange for travel, CPP

It also takes care of hotel expenses in case of loss of all cash. However, there is a pre-defined limit (see table). In case of theft abroad, the company will also provide cash on request. The user has to pay up within 28 days.

OTHER FEATURES. Besides, CPP can also act as a repository of other important information like your passport number, driver's licence number, PAN card, insurance policies, mutual fund folio numbers, etc. It can act as a single point of contact for all important information. Everyone above 18 is eligible to enroll.

Security standards

As CPP is the repository of crucial information, you may have concerns over its security procedures. "CPP follows global information security standards such as PCI DSS adopted by financial institutions. CPP is ISO27001 accredited, which ensures data handling in a secure environment and in accordance with regulatory procedures," says Sandeep Bhalla, business manager cards, Citibank India.

What is not covered

This service protects you against theft only. It will not protect you in case your credit card or debit card details are misused on the internet. It will also not cover you if your card is used by a family member or a friend.

Moreover, remember to update your new card details or renewed card details. "People sometimes forget to register their cards. Each time you get a card, you have to make the effort to get the details updated," says Vishal Dhawan, a Mumbai-based financial planner.

Should you enroll?

CPP allows you to continue with your business in a foreign country even if you lose your wallet. "It appears to be a good product for frequent travellers using multiple cards. If one is on business in a foreign country and loses one's wallet, it can be time consuming to cancel all your credit cards even if you have all your relevant numbers. The stress and time consumed often mean that you are unable to complete your assignment," says Veer Sardesai, a Pune-based financial planner. But if you do not travel much or have just a card or two, DON'T enroll for this service. "Although the features are attractive, the efficiency of CPP and small but critical information about it will be known only once we receive testimony from Indian users. Till then even if you subscribe to the service it would be prudent to have a back up ready the old-fashioned way," adds Sardesai.

will assist you in getting travel tickets re-issued.

WHAT THE PLANS COST

	Classic plan	Premium plan
Single	995	1,295
Joint	1,495	1,945

Finally, since the other services are based on the reimbursement model, delay in claim payment can cause disappointment. Therefore, read the policy terms carefully and ensure that you furnish all the required documents at the *time of making a claim.* ♦

LIMITS ON INSURANCE COVERS AND SERVICES

	Cover ¹	Cover ²	Hotel bills		Cash advance		Travel tickets	
			In India	Abroad	In India	Abroad	In India	Abroad
Classic plan	50,000	15,00,000	40,000	80,000	—	40,000	40,000	80,000
Premium plan	1,00,000	20,00,000	60,000	1,20,000	20,000	60,000	60,000	1,20,000

All figures are in Rs, ¹ Pre-notification cover ² Post-notification cover