

# The Shopify Hidden Fee Guide

What Shopify Doesn't Advertise Up Front —  
and What It's Actually Costing Your Business

A Free Resource from AGMS | [agms.com/shopify-payment-processing/](https://agms.com/shopify-payment-processing/)

## INTRODUCTION

### What This Guide Is About

Shopify is one of the most popular ecommerce platforms in the world — and for good reason. But when it comes to payment processing, many merchants are paying far more than they realize. Shopify's fee structure is layered, plan-dependent, and rarely explained in a single place.

This free guide was created by the team at **AGMS** to give Shopify business owners a plain-English breakdown of the fees that can quietly erode your margins — from Shop Pay Installments at up to 8%, to international orders that can stack fees past 6% before currency conversion is even counted.

Whether you're on Basic or Plus, understanding these numbers is the first step to keeping more of what you earn.

<b>Up to 8%</b>	<b>3.5%</b>	<b>Up to 6%+</b>	<b>1.5%</b>
Shop Pay Installment fee	Premium card rate (Amex, corporate)	International card rate (Basic)	Currency conversion fee (Basic)

## SECTION 1

### Shopify Payments Base Rates by Plan

Shopify Payments is Shopify's built-in payment processor, powered by Stripe. When you use it, you avoid Shopify's additional transaction surcharge — but you still pay a card processing rate that varies by your subscription plan **and by the type of card your customer uses.**

Shopify classifies cards into two tiers: **Standard** (consumer Visa, Mastercard, Discover, Diners Club) and **Premium** (all American Express cards, plus commercial, corporate, and business cards like Visa Business). Premium cards carry a higher rate — and Shopify does not advertise this distinction prominently.

Plan	Monthly Cost	Standard Card Rate	Premium Card Rate	In-Person Rate
Basic	\$39/mo	2.9% + \$0.30	3.5% + \$0.30	2.6% + \$0.10
Grow	\$105/mo	2.7% + \$0.30	3.5% + \$0.30	2.5% + \$0.10
Advanced	\$399/mo	2.5% + \$0.30	3.5% + \$0.30	2.4% + \$0.10
Plus	\$2,300+/mo	2.15% + \$0.30	3.5% + \$0.30	2.0% + \$0.10

### ■ Premium card rate does NOT decrease with plan upgrades

Unlike the standard card rate — which drops from 2.9% on Basic down to 2.15% on Plus — the Premium card rate stays at 3.5% across all plans. If a significant portion of your customers pay with American Express or corporate cards, upgrading your Shopify plan won't reduce that cost. For B2B merchants or stores with high Amex usage, this can meaningfully raise your effective rate.

### ■ What qualifies as a Premium card?

Shopify defines Premium cards as: all domestic American Express cards, plus any commercial, corporate, or business-tier card (e.g., Visa Business, Mastercard Corporate). Standard consumer Visa, Mastercard, and Discover cards are charged at the lower Standard rate. You can see the card-type breakdown in your Shopify admin under Analytics → Reports → Payments.

### ■ Important: The \$0.30 flat fee adds up

On a \$15 order, that flat \$0.30 represents an additional 2% on top of your percentage rate — effectively making low-ticket sales significantly more expensive to process. This is rarely highlighted in Shopify's marketing.

## SECTION 2

# Shop Pay: The Accelerated Checkout Fee

Shop Pay is Shopify's one-click accelerated checkout, used by over 200 million shoppers globally. For merchants on Shopify Payments, enabling Shop Pay itself does not add a separate fee — you simply pay your standard card processing rate on orders that come through it.

However, there's a nuance most merchants miss: **Shop Pay transactions are processed through Shopify Payments only.** If you use a third-party gateway alongside Shopify, Shop Pay orders that route through Shopify

Payments still carry your plan's card rate, while orders using your external gateway incur the additional surcharge on top.

#### ■ Shop Pay only works with Shopify Payments

If you want to offer the Shop Pay button at checkout, you must have Shopify Payments enabled as your payment processor. You cannot use Shop Pay through a third-party gateway like Stripe, Braintree, or Authorize.net directly. This means merchants in certain high-risk categories who cannot use Shopify Payments are locked out of Shop Pay entirely.

**What merchants often overlook:** While the checkout experience is seamless, your effective Shop Pay processing cost still runs 2.15%–2.9% + \$0.30 depending on your plan. On a \$500 order on the Basic plan, that's \$14.80 in processing fees before any installment component is considered.

### SECTION 3

## Shop Pay Installments: The BNPL Fee You May Not See Coming

Shop Pay Installments is Shopify's buy-now-pay-later (BNPL) option, powered by Affirm. It lets customers split purchases into 4 payments over 6 weeks (interest-free) or into longer monthly payment plans. While it can boost average order values and conversion rates, it comes with a significantly higher merchant fee.

Payment Type	Merchant Fee Range	Who Pays It	Notes
4 Pay (6 weeks, 0% APR)	5% – 6%	Merchant	Most common short-term plan
Monthly (Interest-bearing)	Up to 8%	Merchant	Longer term = higher merchant cost
Standard Shop Pay	2.15% – 2.9% + \$0.30	Merchant	Base card rate only

The key thing to understand: **you receive the full sale amount upfront**, minus the fee. Shopify handles collecting installment payments from the customer, so you bear no default risk. But the tradeoff is clear — on an interest-bearing monthly plan, you may be paying **up to 8% of the transaction value** in processing fees alone.

#### ■ 8% on a \$1,000 order = \$80 in fees

If a customer chooses a longer monthly installment plan on a \$1,000 purchase, you could be paying up to \$80 in processing fees on a single transaction. On higher-ticket items — jewelry, furniture, electronics — this can make installment-enabled orders significantly less profitable than they appear at the point of sale.

Shop Pay Installments is currently available to eligible merchants in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom (launched December 2025). Australia and Western Europe are reported to be next on Shopify's roadmap.

### SECTION 4

# International Transactions: The Triple Fee Stack

Selling internationally is one of the most fee-intensive areas in Shopify's pricing structure — and one of the least clearly communicated. When an international order comes through, you can face up to three separate fee layers stacked on top of each other.

## The Three Layers of International Fees:

- 1. Standard Card Processing Fee:** Your base rate based on plan (2.15%–2.9% + \$0.30)
- 2. Cross-Border Card Surcharge:** 1.5% on Basic; 1.0% on Grow, Advanced, and Plus — charged because the card is issued in a different country from your store
- 3. Currency Conversion Fee:** 1.5% on Basic; 1.0% on Grow and above — charged when your customer pays in a currency different from your payout currency

Scenario (Basic Plan)	Fees Applied	Total on \$100 Order
Domestic card, USD	<b>2.9% + \$0.30</b>	~\$3.20
Intl card, USD (no conversion)	<b>2.9% + 1.5% + \$0.30</b>	~\$4.70
Intl card + currency conversion	<b>2.9% + 1.5% + 1.5% + \$0.30</b>	~\$6.20

### ■ An international order on Basic can cost over 6% in processing fees

A \$100 order from an international customer paying in their local currency could cost you \$6.20 in processing fees alone — nearly double the domestic rate — before you account for shipping, platform costs, or product margins. On a product with 20% margins, that's nearly a third of your profit on a single transaction.

**Currency conversion fee change (April 2026):** Shopify changed how this fee is calculated. Previously it was applied to the net order amount (after processing fees were deducted). As of April 6, 2026, it is now applied to the **gross order amount**. The fee rates did not change, but merchants doing significant international volume will notice slightly higher currency fees in their payout reports.

## SECTION 5

# What Shopify Merchants Should Do Right Now

Understanding these fees is the first step. Here are the practical actions you can take to reduce what you're paying:

## 1. Audit your current effective rate

In your Shopify admin, go to Settings → Payments → View Payouts. Look at total fees paid versus total revenue processed. Your effective rate is likely higher than the headline number Shopify shows on its pricing page.

## 2. Check your international sales percentage

In Shopify Analytics, look at orders by country. If more than 20–30% of your revenue comes from international customers paying in foreign currencies, your effective rate is significantly higher than your domestic rate. Consider Shopify Markets with local pricing to offset this.

### 3. Evaluate whether Shop Pay Installments makes sense for your margin

Run the numbers on your average installment order. If your margins are below 15–20%, an 8% installment fee can eliminate most of your profit. Consider setting a minimum order value for installment eligibility, or limiting it to higher-margin product categories.

### 4. Review your Shopify plan relative to your volume

The plan upgrade math changes when international fees and volume stack. The upgrade from Basic to Grow (\$66/month more) breaks even at roughly \$33,000/month in domestic sales — but international fees and installment volume can shift that break-even point lower.

### 5. Request a payment review from AGMS

AGMS works with Shopify merchants to review their current payment setup and identify where a different processing relationship may reduce their effective cost. There is no obligation and no rebuild required — just an honest look at the numbers.

## SECTION 6

# Quick Reference: Shopify Fee Cheat Sheet

Fee Type	Basic Plan	Grow Plan	Advanced	Plus
Standard card rate (online)	<b>2.9% + \$0.30</b>	<b>2.7% + \$0.30</b>	<b>2.5% + \$0.30</b>	<b>2.15% + \$0.30</b>
Premium card rate (Amex/Corp)	<b>3.5% + \$0.30</b>	<b>3.5% + \$0.30</b>	<b>3.5% + \$0.30</b>	<b>3.5% + \$0.30</b>
In-person POS rate	<b>2.6% + \$0.10</b>	<b>2.5% + \$0.10</b>	<b>2.4% + \$0.10</b>	<b>2.0% + \$0.10</b>
Cross-border card surcharge	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>
Currency conversion fee	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>
Shop Pay (accelerated checkout)	Your card rate	Your card rate	Your card rate	Your card rate
Shop Pay Installments (4-pay)	<b>5%–6%</b>	<b>5%–6%</b>	<b>5%–6%</b>	Waived*
Shop Pay Installments (monthly)	<b>Up to 8%</b>	<b>Up to 8%</b>	<b>Up to 8%</b>	Waived*
Max intl fee stack (Basic)	<b>~6.2% + \$0.30</b>	—	—	—

\* Shopify Plus merchants using Shopify Payments as their sole payment provider have third-party transaction fees waived, including on secondary payment methods. Confirm current installment fee treatment with Shopify directly for Plus accounts.

All rates based on publicly available Shopify documentation and third-party analysis as of June 2026. Rates are subject to change. Verify current rates at [help.shopify.com](https://help.shopify.com).

## Ready to Stop Overpaying on Shopify?

Get a free Shopify payment review from the AGMS team. We'll walk through your current setup, show you what you're actually paying, and explain your options — no pressure, no obligation.

[agms.com/shopify-payment-processing/](https://agms.com/shopify-payment-processing/)

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