

Technology Fee

Tech Fee is an optional solution we provide to agencies that are evaluating how to fund various internal costs around doing business electronically including things like paying credit card transaction fees, purchasing tablets for inspectors, etc. It is implemented at the individual fee item level, fees are 'coded' with a TEC designation that indicates they should be included in any Tech fee calculation.

Because this solution is determined at the fee level and not at the payment method level, all customers are paying this small percentage-based fee (jurisdictions decide the rate) across the board regardless of payment method. This fee, by design, is in place to assist agencies in recouping overhead costs related to using electronic systems and their related technology such as:

- apps,
- services like GIS or financial software connectivity,
- electronic plan review (Bluebeam, DigiPlan, etc),
- credit card transaction fees,
- larger monitors for electronic plan review,
- plot printers to print large-size plans,
- higher performing PCs to run necessary software simultaneously,
- ipads/tablets for inspectors or code officers to use in the field,
- increase to internet services (bandwidth/Wi-Fi) to handle online traffic,
- a PC kiosk at the front counter for walk-up customer use, and more.

NONE of the above are required but they are all ultimately part of the shift in cost when moving from doing business on paper to doing business electronically.

It is important to consider that no one module/department is singled out in this way - all tools and electronic services are available globally across all modules - Building, Planning/CE, Public Works, and Onsite. While it is ultimately the decision of the agency – charging Tech fee in only one module/department could be perceived by those customers as punitive when all other modules are also using the same system and electronic tools in their daily operations. In this way, Tech fee is charged to all customers equitably that are benefitting from doing business electronically such as applying and submitting plans/documents electronically, paying online, paying with credit card over the counter (versus being limited to cash/check), getting inspection results immediately upon inspection and via email, being able to schedule inspections via an app that the inspector also has app access to in the field using a handheld device/tablet, etc.

The other end of this on the spectrum in covering internal costs related to doing business electronically is looking at increasing fees to included/cover the actual business costs versus a separate add-on fee/surcharge like Tech fee.