

- **Convenient and reliable:** Your money will be automatically loaded onto your card on payment day each month. You will have access to your money at all times.
- **Easy to use:** You can make purchases, pay bills online, get cashback at stores, get cash at an ATM or from bank or credit union tellers; or buy money orders at the post office.
- **Secure.** Similar to a regular debit card, you have a PIN that protects your account. The money in your card account is protected and insured for up to \$250,000 by the FDIC.
- **Funds are protected from creditors:** Federal law makes it illegal for a creditor to seize your Social Security benefits. This includes benefits you get on a debit card.
- **It's free to use the card:** There are no sign-up or monthly fees, though some optional services do charge fees.

Visit <https://www.ssa.gov/deposit/howtosign.htm> to sign up for Direct Deposit or Direct Express.

Automatic Bill Payments

Automatic bill pay can be a convenient way to pay most of your monthly bills. The money is automatically taken from your checking account on the same day every month (if the date lands on a holiday or a Sunday, it is usually taken out the next business day). It is relatively easy to set up by phone or through a company's website. You will need the name of your bank, your checking account or debit/credit card number, and your account number that appears on your bills.

What to consider before deciding to use automatic bill pay:

- Check the due dates and make sure the money is in your account. Can you guarantee your account will have enough money for each bill every month when it's due? You may incur fees from your bank *and* the company if your account has insufficient funds.
- Check your statements for discrepancies in your bills. It's easy to overlook mistakes if the bill is taken care of automatically.
- Keep records. If you only get receipts through emails, flag or print them.
- To protect your identity with various accounts, don't use easy-to-guess passwords. Make sure your computer has up-to-date anti-virus software installed.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Original material from Peerlink National Technical Assistance Center.