

10 Unexpected Charges to Avoid on Your AWS Bill

CloudHealth
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It's not uncommon for AWS customers to receive higher-than-anticipated bills for cloud services. In many circumstances, a lack of visibility into cloud resources and activity can result in services being used without approval, costs accrued without warning, and charges for resources that are no longer needed.

To help know what to look for, here are 10 of the most common scenarios that lead to unexpected charges on your AWS bill. You can see our complete guide [here](#).

1 Shadow IT Activity

Shadow IT occurs when users, teams, or departments deploy resources or embrace new processes without proper approval. Until you have total visibility across your environment and have implemented measures to prevent the use of unsanctioned services, shadow IT costs are likely contributing to your AWS bill.

2 Exceeding Free Tier Limits

Any usage above AWS' free tier limits—or any usage after a free trial has expired—is charged at standard billing rates. To avoid these charges, make sure you've set up alerts that notify you before a free tier is about to expire or before you exceed what the free tier covers before incurring charges.

3 Unattached EBS Volumes

It's common to see thousands of dollars in unattached Elastic Block Storage (EBS) volumes in AWS accounts—volumes that cost money but aren't used for anything. To avoid seeing these charges on your bill, create a policy that automatically deletes unused EBS volumes.

4 Inefficient Auto-Scaling Groups

In theory, AWS Auto Scaling enables you to maintain steady, predictable performance at the lowest possible cost. In reality, it's rarely that simple. It's common for teams to take shortcuts when configuring auto-scaling groups that lead to larger capacity-to-demand ratios, and consequently, lead to unnecessarily higher costs.

Don't make the mistake of thinking auto-scaling groups will do all the work for you—it's important to have access to granular metrics about the initial configuration and ongoing utilization of auto-scaling groups in order to accurately identify and optimize inefficient or wasteful configurations.

5 Aged EBS Snapshots

Many organizations use EBS snapshots to create point-in-copy recovery points to use in case of data loss or disaster, but costs can quickly get out of control if not closely monitored. Set a standard in your organization for how many snapshots should be retained per instance, or consider setting a policy that sends a notification or automatically deletes snapshots older than six months.

6 Elastic IP and Carrier IP Addresses

You can start to rack up charges if you assign more than one Elastic IP to the same instance, if the instance is stopped or terminated, if the IP address is unattached from the network interface, or if it's re-mapped more than 100 times per month. If your AWS accounts contain any disassociated Elastic IPs or Carrier IPs, be sure to either reassociate them to an instance or delete them outright in order to avoid wasted cost.

7 AWS OpsWorks

If you use AWS OpsWorks to create AWS resources, you need to make sure that you also use OpsWorks to terminate those resources. If not, the OpsWorks auto-healing feature will restart them automatically, and you'll continue to be charged.

8 Amazon CloudWatch

Amazon CloudWatch is a valuable service for AWS users to monitor resources and track spend. However, as your team begins to scale cloud usage, it's easy to exceed limits for custom metrics, alarms, dashboards, and API calls, all of which can drive up costs rapidly and unexpectedly.

9 Data Requests, Transfers, and Retrievals

The cost of data requests, transfers, and retrievals is often overlooked. While infrequently accessed storage tiers can save you money on storage, retrieving and accessing data can quickly rack up costs, with higher prices for larger amounts of data and faster retrieval times.

10 Reserved Instances and Savings Plans

Purchasing Reserved Instances and Savings Plans can save cloud costs substantially, but failing to utilize, monitor, or maximize them properly can lead to unexpected and unwanted charges on your monthly cloud bill. Make sure you're able to track and analyze benefits, identify waste, and allocate savings to ensure you're optimizing your Savings Plans or Reserved Instance purchases.

To stay ahead of unexpected cloud costs regardless of the source, it's imperative to have visibility into all your cloud resources and activity.



CloudHealth by VMware can provide holistic visibility into your multi-cloud environment so you can successfully manage and optimize your cloud costs. Click [here](#) to connect with a cloud cost optimization expert and see the platform in action.