



## **District Attorney's Office • 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District**

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# **Fraud Alert**

## **Skimmers Placed on Gas Pumps by Thieves are Rapidly Increasing**

Identity thieves are at it again. Gas pumps are being compromised by national crime rings who are installing undetectable skimmers inside fueling pumps to extract personal information off of customers' payment cards. The Denver-metro area is one of a handful of major cities being hit by these sophisticated rings, and a rash of recent cases has been reported in Arapahoe and Douglas Counties. Although such devices have been around for a while, skimmers used by identity thieves today are much smaller than what's been used in the past, so consumers are less able to detect these instruments at the pump. To add more "fuel to the fire", while the recent change-over to "chip" payment card readers (EMV technology) has significantly reduced the overall incidence of identity theft, gas pumps are not required to convert to this technology until 2020. Meanwhile, the magnetic stripe on credit cards still contains essential personal information, thus making credit cards vulnerable to identity theft until the change-over to chip technology is complete and the stripe removed.

### **Precautions to take**

- ❖ While not convenient, the safest method is to pay at the register with cash or a credit card until pay pumps convert over to chip technology.
- ❖ If paying indoors is simply not possible, check the pump to make sure the security seal (heavy piece of tape) that runs across the pump panel is not broken, and that the ends of the seal are solidly affixed to the pump.
- ❖ Fill up at a pump closest to the gas station, and most visible to the cashier. Thieves have to work quickly and are more likely to install skimmers in pumps that are out of the clerk's view.
- ❖ Don't use stations that can be quickly accessed from the highway. Thieves target locations that provide a quick getaway, or are outside the hub of traffic or businesses.
- ❖ Be suspicious if the card doesn't insert smoothly into the slot or feels different than what you are accustomed to. This may indicate that an illicit skimmer has been installed. Immediately cancel the service and pay at the register. Inform the cashier of your suspicions so urgent action can be taken to put the pump out of service.
- ❖ If you believe your card has been compromised at the pump, check your credit card statement as soon as possible, or call your card company for quick verification.
- ❖ Run a credit report with one of the three credit bureaus [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com). Check to see if any unauthorized credit was taken in your name. If you discover you are a victim of identity theft, immediately cancel your credit card and inform one of the three credit bureaus so a fraud alert can be placed on your account, then file a police report in the jurisdiction where you believe your card was used.

**DA – 18<sup>th</sup> Consumer Protection Line: 720-874-8547**