



HALL COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

CRIME PREVENTION UNIT

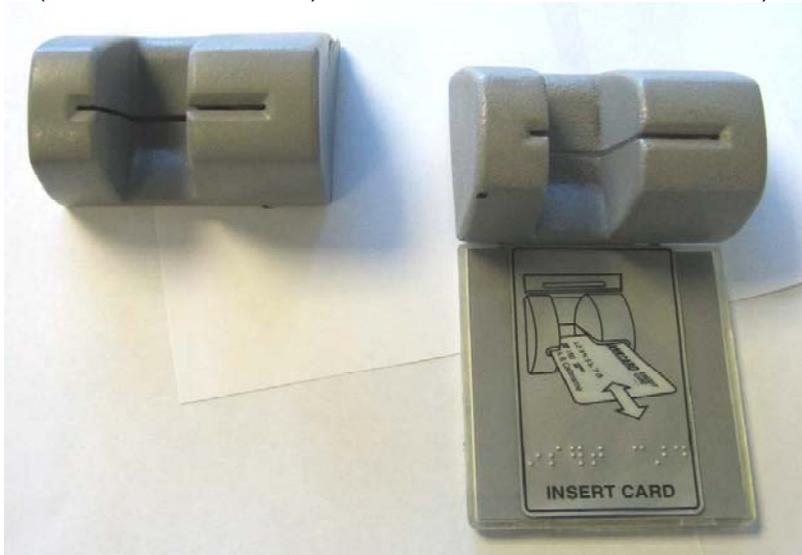


CRIME PREVENTION TIP

DATE: January 27, 2010
SUBJECT: ATM SKIMMERS

ATM "skimmers" are devices that criminals place over a real ATM card slot to hijack the account number, paired with a tiny camera to record the PIN number being entered as cards are used at the machine. Even with the device installed, the machine will typically work as it normally does, so most victims have no idea that their information has been compromised until it's too late. These devices have been around for a little while now, but in the past their design has been somewhat crude. That's changing however, and they are becoming increasingly sophisticated. See the attached photos of a self-contained device that would fool most anyone. I personally visited an ATM this afternoon with these photos in hand and examined the machine closely. The device in these photos was an exact replica of the card slot on the machine I was standing in front of, and a very good one at that. Unless you were specifically looking for the clues, you would miss it.

(Actual card reader slot)



(Skimmer device- the tiny hole on the left side is the camera)

(under side)





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These photos were taken from an incident that occurred in December, 2009 in Woodland Hills, California. No, Gainesville, Georgia is not California (can I mention here how thankful I am for that?), but you may be familiar with the old adage, "as goes California, so goes the Nation." Typically, criminal trends that start in California eventually find their way eastward. Be prepared when they arrive.

LESSONS LEARNED:

- 1) Anytime you use an ATM, be aware not only of your immediate surroundings for direct threats, but take just a moment to examine the machine itself.
- 2) If you suspect that a skimming device or unauthorized camera has been placed on the machine, don't use it (obviously...), contact law enforcement, and stand by until they arrive to point out the problem in question.
- 3) If you have already used an ATM and notice a skimmer afterward, take all necessary steps with your financial institution to protect your account from fraudulent activity.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact

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