

Regina police probe debit card 'skimming' linked to New York

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Devices are sometimes rigged to capture electronic data from debit cards and credit cards so the card information can be used elsewhere. (Glenn Francey/CBC)

Police in Regina are investigating after a number of complaints arose about debit card 'skimming' linked to New York City.

Police said Wednesday that between March and April debit card numbers were "compromised at different Regina businesses, likely by using card skimming equipment."

They said the people doing the skimming usually substitute a real PIN pad terminal with their own, altered, PIN pad.

"The altered PIN pad has the capability of recording card numbers and clients' PIN numbers as they are keyed into the device," police said.

They said that the link to New York City was noticed on Sept. 20 when information "fraudulently-obtained last spring" was used at ATM machines located in New York City.

They said they have received reports of 50 such transactions, but believe the number of victims may be higher.

They said most of the fraudulent cash withdrawals were in amounts from \$30 to \$800, adding that financial institutions are contacting customers whose information may have been compromised.

Police also provided tips on how to avoid skimmers:

- Avoid using the swipe option on PIN pad machines if possible. It is safer using the chip option on your card.
- Be aware that an altered PIN pad machine may require that you slide your card into the machine all the way, thus reading your card's magnetic strip. You should never need to slide your card into the PIN pad more than a few inches.
- Look closely at the PIN pad for signs of a false cover or tampering.
- Where possible use the TAP option on credit and debit cards. (You are not required to key in your PIN number when using the TAP option, therefore if your card is compromised; the suspect will not have your PIN number.)
- Regardless of the type of transaction, card holders should change their PIN numbers regularly. The same prevention advice applies to credit cards as well.
- Check financial statements carefully. Any unauthorized transactions should be reported immediately to the individual's bank or financial institution.

Police said the skimming incident were still under investigation.