

ATM/ Point of Sale Skimmer Safety Tips
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With the ongoing pandemic, many places are accepting cashless payment options only. People are using their credit, debit, and gift cards more than ever. This has led to an increase in criminals using skimmer and shimmer devices to record your card information. Please review these crime prevention and awareness tips.

Skimmer vs Shimmer?

A skimmer is a device used to capture your card numbers and PIN codes. Oftentimes it is an overlay that looks similar to the original card reader or numeric pad. A shimmer functions exactly like a skimmer, but instead of the device being placed on the outside it is typically placed inside a machine.



- Look for sticky residue on the card reader before using the machine.
- Look for pinhole cameras placed above the keypads on the ATM machine.
- Look for multiple people standing together or loitering at the ATM or point of sale checkout. Criminals may use people as “lookouts.”
- Offenders will often cover or block the view of the point of sale / ATM machine while they place a skimmer overlay onto the machine.
- Look for any indications the device has been tampered with.
- Check for card skimmers by wiggling the card reader.
- Set up alerts with your bank for all transactions.
- Trust your instincts, if something doesn’t feel right go to another location.
- Utilize your bank’s app to deposit checks and other transactions.
- Do not attempt to intervene; be vigilant and report all the details you observed.

Report suspicious behavior to the bank or business. If you are a victim of a crime, please call the Irvine Police Department at 949-724-7000. If there are suspicious subjects on scene or to report a crime in progress, call 911.