



ERIK NASARENKO District Attorney

NEWS RELEASE

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Skimming Scam Alert

VENTURA, California – District Attorney Erik Nasarenko advises the public that in April 2022, the Ventura County Sheriff’s Office recovered a skimming device mimicking a point-of-sale machine from a 7-Eleven store in Moorpark. The Ventura County District Attorney’s Government Fraud Unit was alerted since one card skimmed was an electronic benefits transfer card used for welfare benefits. From May 1-3, 2022, Ventura County lost \$22,000 in welfare EBT skimming theft. Statewide losses for May, are already at \$3.9 million in EBT benefits.

Suspects typically distract a store clerk in order to place the skimming device. The device appears identical to the point-of-sale machine but is an overlay that captures the card data from the victim. The device either transmits the card data directly to the suspects via Bluetooth, or it stores the data within the device and is later recovered and downloaded by the suspects. The card information is cloned, and the money is spent without the card owner’s knowledge. Some indicators of skimming devices to look out for are:

- Labels on the machine indicating the chip reader does not work.
- The chip reader function does not work and directs the user to swipe instead.
- The sides of the device shift, lift, or appear bulky which indicates an overlay.
- The point-of-sale machine appears unnecessarily worn or does not match other machines at the counter.

The most secure point-of-sale transactions are via tap function, chipped cards, or app-based pay systems such as Apple Pay or Google Pay. If you must use the magnetic strip swipe function at a point-of-sale machine, avoid using a card where a PIN number is required.

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The Ventura County District Attorney's Office is the public prosecutor for the county's 850,000 residents. The office employs approximately 290 employees including attorneys, investigators, victim advocates, and professional support staff who strive to seek justice, ensure public safety, and protect the rights of crime victims.