



ABA News to Use

Keeping banking's frontline personnel informed

Tips to Protect Debit Cards

Despite the convenience and popularity of debit cards, there is a risk of fraud or theft.

In fact, it's just as important to protect your debit card as you would protect cash, credit cards and checks. Debit cards are subject to a unique threat, called "skimming." Skimming occurs when thieves set up a device that captures the magnetic stripe and keypad information from ATM machines and gas pumps.

To avoid becoming a victim of debit card fraud, consider these tips:

- Check your bank statements immediately. Make sure all payments are yours.
- Periodically check your account balance and transactions, by utilizing online banking, by telephone or by printing interim statements at the ATM.
- Contact your bank immediately if your card is lost, stolen or subject to fraudulent use.
- Keep a record (but not in your wallet or purse) of card numbers, PINs, expiration dates and 1-800 numbers for banks so you can contact the issuing bank easily in cases of theft.
- Memorize your PIN number. Do not use your birth date, address, phone number or Social Security number.
- Never store your PIN with your card, and do not make it available to others.
- Keep your receipts. You'll need them to check your statement. If they have your account number on them, tear up or shred receipts before throwing them away.
- Mark through any blank spaces on debit slips, including the tip line at restaurants, so the total amount cannot be changed.
- Know your limits. Many issuers limit daily purchases and withdrawals for your protection.
- Do not use an ATM if it looks suspicious -- it could be a skimming device.
- Be wary of those trying to help you, especially if an ATM "eats" your card -- such people may be trying to steal your card number and PIN.
- Do not give your PIN number to anyone over the phone. Thieves often steal the cards and then call the victim for their PIN, sometimes claiming to be law enforcement or the issuing bank.

For more tips and information, visit the Federal Trade Commission's Web site at www.ftc.gov.