



## Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation

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For Immediate Release - June 13, 2017

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## Office of Consumer Affairs' Division of Standards Goes Statewide in Search of Skimming Devices in Gas Pumps

**Boston, MA** (June 13, 2017) – The Massachusetts Division of Standards and municipal weights and measures inspectors recently completed inspections of 263 gas stations in 74 cities and towns statewide checking for skimming devices attached to gas pumps. After examining 1,525 pumps, the agency's 2017 Skimmer Inspection Survey reported that four skimmers were discovered inside pumps at F.L. Roberts service stations in Easthampton and Amherst on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Local police responded to both locations to remove and recover the evidence.

Inspectors also found that service stations were not uniformly using security tape to indicate the upper chamber of a gas pump hadn't been tampered with. Of the 263 gas stations visited, 147 had no security tape affixed to their gas pumps. Further, the agency has learned and is warning service station owners that some thieves are now using counterfeit security tape which they place on a pump's upper chamber after placing a skimming device inside a pump.

"During these inspections, compliance officers urged service station owners and managers to regularly check the inside, keypads and debit and credit card slots of their pumps," said Consumer Affairs Undersecretary John Chapman. "Thieves will continue using these devices and their placement can occur anywhere and at any time. Consumers need to be wary of any pump that looks as if it may have been tampered with.

Inspectors are also advising service station personnel to change the locks on their pumps to ones that do not use a universal key, which like skimmers, thieves can purchase on the internet.

### **Advice to Consumers**

- Use pumps closest to the attendant and be aware of lighting conditions. The darkest lit and furthest pump from the attendant is a thief's ideal target.
- Pay inside and use cash when possible. Credit and debit cards account for more than half of all U.S. gasoline purchases, making it all too easy for thieves to acquire your information.
- Check the condition of the pumps and pay attention to details. Sometimes there are slight abnormalities that you may detect. If it looks suspicious or if you spot any sign of tampering, immediately notify an attendant and make sure the police are called.
- Look around. Some thieves use Blue Tooth technology which requires them to be within a certain distance of the pump. If a person or car seems to be lingering for too long, notify an attendant.
- Monitor your bank account daily and check your credit card statements. Notify your bank or card issuer if anything looks unusual or if you spot fraudulent charges.

The Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation along with its five agencies work together to achieve two goals: to protect and empower consumers through advocacy and education, and to ensure a fair playing field for all Massachusetts businesses. The Office also oversees the state's lemon laws, data breach reporting, home improvement contractor program, and the state's Do Not Call Registry. Follow the office at its [blog](#), on [Facebook](#), and on Twitter [@Mass Consumer](#).

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