Camera Picks up Illegal Access to Local Gas Pump
Auditor & Police asking for help identifying skimmer suspect

HAMILTON, Ohio – Smile for the camera! That’s the advice Auditor Roger Reynolds is now giving to those who install illegal credit card skimmers inside fuel pumps in Butler County.

Butler County Auditor inspectors placed a security camera inside a pump where a skimmer was recently found. A few days later the camera recorded a man illegally accessing the pump in what appears to be an effort to retrieve the skimmer.

Since the skimmer had already been removed, there was nothing else for the person to do but quickly shut the access panel. His image was recorded and now Auditor Reynolds and the Fairfield City Police Department are asking for your help to identify the man in the video.

“We are continuing our aggressive inspections to prevent credit card skimmer thefts,” said Reynolds. “Criminals are using technology to steal and we’re using technology to catch them.”

With the two skimmers found last month, a total of 15 skimmer devices have now been found by Butler County inspectors since November 2015.

The footage shows a man opening the access panel only slightly, looking directly at where the skimmer was placed on the inside of the panel, and then quickly closing the panel when it was evident the skimmer had already been removed.

“We’re asking anyone with information on the man in the video to contact:

Tom Kamphaus, Auditor Inspector (513) 785-6318
Brian Rednour, Fairfield Police Dept. (513) 896-8285

No one’s credit card data was stolen in these latest attempts as the skimmer devices were removed before the criminals returned. On inspection the prior week, the fuel pumps were skimmer free.
In an effort to keep the pumps as safe as possible from fraud, Reynolds has had additional inspectors on duty since June 2016. The inspectors have been making weekly skimmer checks of every gas pump at approximately 100 service stations in the county.

Reynolds said there is still more that some station owners can do to protect their pumps from illegal access and he hopes they will take action, such as changing out their locks if they can be opened with a universal key.

“It’s important for station owners and managers to take the security of their pumps more seriously by utilizing security tape, changing out vulnerable locks, and having attendants inspect the pumps when they are regularly changing out receipt paper,” he said.

When a credit card is run through a skimmer, the small device stores the cardholder’s data. Once the credit information is obtained, the thief can then sell the information or clone the credit card. All the devices found so far in the county have been located inside fuel pumps.

For those that continue to pay with a card instead of cash, debit cards should be avoided. When a debit card passes through a skimmer, the PIN and the account number are stolen, allowing direct access to the person’s checking account.

Tips for Stations

- Activity at gas stations should be closely and securely monitored by station managers and attendants.
- Gas pumps should be opened up and the internal mechanisms examined regularly by station staff.
- The most effective way to stop these scams is to install better, more secure locks on every pump. Better locks will prohibit unauthorized access to a gas pump’s interior components.

Tips for Consumers

- NEVER use a debit card when paying for gas at the pump. Thieves can steal PIN numbers.
- Report any unusual activity or anything that looks out of place.
- Monitor monthly bank and credit card statements for fraudulent charges.
- Use cash or prepaid cards to pay for purchases whenever possible.
- If you believe you have been a victim of a skimmer scam, notify local law enforcement and your credit card issuer immediately.