

SOUTH LAKE TAHOE POLICE DEPARTMENT NEWS RELEASE

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Credit Card Skimming / Identity Theft in South Lake Tahoe

On 02/13/2013 SLTPD began investigating a fraud report regarding stolen credit card information. The victim used a credit card to purchase fuel at the Safeway gas station at the corner of US Highway 50 and Takela Avenue. The victim's credit card information was stolen using a "skimmer." A skimmer is a device that it used to steal credit card information. Skimming can occur when a third-party card reading device is installed by an identity thief, either outside or inside a fuel dispenser or other card-swiping terminal. This device allows the thief to capture a customer's credit and debit card information, including their PIN, with each card swipe. These devices are not easily detected, and there usually is not much consumers are able to do prevent this sort of identity theft. An internet search will reveal several photographs of credit card skimmer devices.

SLTPD investigating officer Jake Herminghaus confirmed there are no longer any skimming devices at any of the Safeway gas pumps. Although the skimmer was not recovered, there is evidence suggesting that an internal skimmer had in fact been used. SLTPD wants to reassure our community that the fuel pumps at the Safeway station are now safe to be used. The investigation revealed that there is more than one victim, and we expect there may be others identified after they receive their credit card statements. The Safeway gas station opened for business on February 4th, 2013 after taking over ownership from Fox Gas. SLTPD encourages anyone who used a credit or debit card to purchase fuel from the Safeway station gas pumps during the month of February 2013 to monitor their credit statements for fraudulent activity by identity theft.

If you have any information about the suspect or if you have been a victim of this type of fraud please call the SLTPD at 530-542-6100 and refer to case number 1302-0799. Secret Witness can be reached at 530-541-6800.

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