

June 7, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONSUMER ALERT: Skimming Scams Targeting Arkansans

LITTLE ROCK – Little Rock and Stuttgart police have recently reported finding skimmers on ATM and gas station card readers, which allows criminals to clone the consumer's credit card to purchase other items. Credit and debit card users should take extra steps to protect their account information as multiple reports of skimming have hit Arkansas so far this year.

"A skimmer is a device that goes over an existing card reader and steals data off the card's magnetic strip," said Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge. "The criminal who places the skimmer may also install a video camera or fake keypad to capture pin numbers as they are entered. But consumers can oftentimes spot a skimmer by taking time to closely inspect the card reader."

Attorney General Rutledge released the following tips to avoid falling victim to skimming:

- Check for obvious signs of tampering. If something looks different, such as a different color or material or the graphics are not aligned correctly, do not use that card reader and notify the owner or management.
- Wiggle everything, including the card reader. ATMs are solidly constructed and usually will not have parts that loosen. Also wiggle the card as it is inserted. *PC Magazine* reports that the skimmer needs the card to go in straight to read the data correctly, but most ATMs take the card and return it so the movement will not affect the transaction but could foil a skimmer.
- Cover your hand while entering the PIN number. Shielding the keypad with your free hand could protect your bank account.
- Use ATMs in busy locations. Scammers need time to install the skimming equipment and are less likely to take that risk if there are people around. ATMs inside banks and grocery stores are usually safer than those outside.

- Always review account statements for any suspicious activity. If you detect an unauthorized charge, notify your financial institution as soon as possible. Timely reporting of an unauthorized charge will mitigate your liability.

Unfortunately, the chip-enabled cards are not currently protected from this scam because most are also equipped with the magnetic stripe which holds that data these scammers are looking for.

Consumers who believe they have been victims of skimming should contact local law enforcement and card provider or bank to report the fraud.

For more information and tips to avoid scams and other consumer-related issues, contact the Arkansas Attorney General's office at (800) 482-8982 or consumer@arkansasag.gov or visit ArkansasAG.gov or facebook.com/AGLeslieRutledge.

About Attorney General Leslie Rutledge

Leslie Carol Rutledge is the 56th Attorney General of Arkansas. She is the first woman and first Republican in Arkansas history to be elected to the office. Since taking office, she has begun a Mobile Office program, a Military and Veterans Initiative, a Metal Theft Prevention program and a Cooperative Disability Investigations program. She has led efforts to teach internet safety, combat domestic violence and make the office the top law firm for Arkansans. Rutledge also serves as Vice Chairwoman of the Republican Attorneys General Association and re-established and co-chairs the National Association of Attorneys General Committee on Agriculture.

A native of Batesville, she is a graduate of the University of Arkansas and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law. Rutledge clerked for the Arkansas Court of Appeals, was Deputy Counsel for Gov. Mike Huckabee, served as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney in Lonoke County and subsequently was an Attorney at the Department of Human Services before serving as Counsel at the Republican National Committee. Rutledge and her husband, Boyce, have a home in Pulaski County and a farm in Crittenden County.