

RFID Skimming - How to Protect Against RFID Theft



Radio Frequency Identification cards are convenient ways to establish your identity when banking or handling other important transactions. However, they introduce a new element of risk in the form of RFID skimming. With the increasing prevalence of RFID-enabled cards, thieves are now attempting to remotely scan people's purses and wallets to collect their private information.

It doesn't take much for a scammer with the right equipment to skim your card — you may not even notice it as it happens. However, there are a few steps you can take to protect yourself when you're out and about:

- Know which of your cards have RFID technology: Not all credit cards have an RFID chip. The first step to preventing identity and data theft is to be fully aware of the risks. All U.S. passports have an RFID chip, as do all PayPass-enabled MasterCard and Visa Contactless cards.
- Don't use contactless cards: If you're willing to sacrifice the convenience of contactless payments, ask your credit or debit card provider for a chip-less card. As this technology becomes more prevalent, however, it will be harder to avoid. For this reason, it's generally better to establish safe habits now.
- Keep RFID cards together: Keeping your RFID-enabled cards and items bundled together can be an effective way to prevent RFID skimming. The more chips there are in one place, the harder it is for a sensor to detect them with accuracy.

- Remain situationally aware: One of the best things you can do to protect yourself when using an RFID-enabled card or ID is to pay attention. Recognize that a risk is present and be wary of how and where you use a contactless card. If you're in a crowded environment or you're at all uncertain about a transaction, pay in cash instead.
- Pay attention to your bank statements: Another common-sense solution for minimizing your risk of loss due to ID theft is to monitor your banking activity closely. If you notice anything that seems odd — especially if you've recently been in a high-risk situation — contact your credit card provider as soon as possible and report it.
- Wrap your cards in a material that can block RFID scanners: Wrapping your RFID-enabled cards in aluminum foil or an anti-static plastic is an easy DIY hack for preventing RFID skimming. Foil interrupts radio waves, while anti-static bags (available at most electronics stores) insulate against electrical activity. While this method isn't 100% effective, it's an easy and affordable way to add an extra layer of protection between your wallet and thieves.
- Use an RFID-blocking wallet or pouch: If you want full protection and peace of mind when using contactless cards or carrying RFID-enabled documents, a commercial pouch or wallet is the way to go. JEMIC Shielding Technology manufactures several products, including our skim card protector sleeves and RFID-blocking pouches, that create an impenetrable firewall that will keep you, your data and your finances safe.

JEMIC Shielding Technology is a leading manufacturer of electromagnetic interference shielding technology. We've leveraged that expertise to offer a variety of consumer products that prevent RFID skimming and identity theft. Browse our website to learn more or contact us to request a quote.