



Contactless card owners warned against public transport scanner hack.

A Facebook post went viral, after a man saw a thief scamming people out of their money in a tech-savvy manner. In the UK a thief can put through payments of less than £30 with a wireless card reader by scanning nearby wallets of unsuspecting people.



“This guy was spotted wandering round with a Point of Sale (POS) device. All he has to do is key in a price less than £30 and then touch the device on the pocket that contains your wallet. Ching! You've just been charged automatically on your touch pay enabled credit/debit card...”

Feb 2016

It's true - card readers can scan through wallets. The use of portable contactless card payment devices, which are easily available from payment merchants, (e.g.; PayPal Here Contactless enabled reader) is wide open to abuse by criminals. Every individual carrying a contactless bank card is vulnerable to an instant and unknown 'debit' of up to £30.00 whenever they are in public.

In July 2015 Which? tested 10 cards (six debit and four credit) to assess security risks. Using an easily obtainable reader and free software to decode data, they were able to read the card number and expiry date from all 10 cards. They were also able to read limited details of the last 10 transactions.

Contactless cards are now wildly popular, and used in one in seven sales. As of June 2016, there are a total of 92.1 m contactless cards in issue in the UK. On average, each contactless transaction is for £8.60.

“Sixty percent of contactless transactions now take place outside the M25, confirming this isn't just a London phenomenon.”

Visa Europe

There are increasing concerns reported over security with contactless cards. Purchases may not appear on a customer's account for some time after a card has been reported lost or stolen, leaving thieves free to keep using them at will. More worryingly a MoneySavingExpert.com investigation has also revealed that all the major banks' contactless cards can be used after cancellation.

The banking industry states that Cardholders are fully protected against fraud and would receive a full refund from their bank, however, the onus is on you to check your statements and report any fraudulent activity to your bank in order to apply for a refund. Furthermore the banking industry uses the clause, “**A full refund will be given IF the Cardholder has taken reasonable precautions to protect their card.**” Exactly what the 'reasonable precaution' is, remains unspecified.