

Agriculture / Weights & Measures Community Services Group

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CSAC 2021 Challenge Award Entry

Agriculture / Weights & Measures Department Enhanced Retail Motor Fuel Device Inspections

Overview of the Program:

Implemented credit card skimming device inspections into our routine retail motor fuel dispenser inspections to reduce consumer fraud.

The Challenge:

According to the FBI and the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, San Bernardino County is facing a rise in credit card skimming devices that are attached to retail motor fuel dispensers. Skimmers can range from complicated devices installed inside a card reader to simple devices hidden within retail motor fuel dispensers. The skimmers capture credit card numbers and PINs. The credit card information can then easily be transmitted to remote electronic devices, which in turn can be used fraudulently. Credit card fraud is the second most common type of identity theft reported and the FBI stated card skimming costs consumers and financial institutions more than \$1 billion a year.

The Solution:

The San Bernardino County Department of Agriculture / Weights & Measures routinely performs regulatory inspections on all retail motor fuel dispensers to ensure the accuracy of the volume of fuel dispensed. The department has instituted inspection procedures to proactively look for credit card skimmers by including the internal inspections of the retail motor fuel dispensers credit card reading system.

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Innovation:

The department works closely with other County Agricultural / Weights & Measures Departments throughout the State as well as collaborating with California Department of Food and Agriculture Division of Measurement Standards, in order to achieve common goals and objectives. County Agricultural/Standards Officers follow the Examination Procedures Outlined as established by State Guidelines. Our Department did not have a need to consider innovation regarding these types of inspections until recently, when faced with the uptake in credit card fraud. We were the first County to include the inspection for skimming devices in every retail motor fuel dispenser as part of our routine inspection procedure and we anticipate other Counties to follow our lead.

Results:

Since implementation, our department has found 18 credit card skimmers throughout the County. This results in retail motor fuel station owners and consumers having added confidence they are less likely to be the victim of fraud when using their credit card to purchase fuel.

Replicability:

The process can be replicated with no cost to other California Counties (Agriculture / Weights & Measures Consumer Protection Divisions). Each County could adopt the same inspection methods to help facilitate consumer protection.

Program Contact:

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