

High tech pick pockets

When you walk through crowds it's natural to be alert to make sure your wallet or purse is secure but new technology is making it possible for thieves to steal your information without you ever knowing about it. Our consumer specials for commercials show how you can protect yourself against high tech pickpockets.

On the street, at the airport even at the mall thanks to new technology called RFID you could be the victim of a high tech pickpocket. People can pickpocket you even without touching you. How ? RFID stands for Radio Frequency Identification. RFID chips in IDbadges and credit card, sends it or receive a short range of radio signals . The chips are also in all US passports issued since 2006 and in passport IDcard. And RFIDs will soon be used in grocery scanners to lessen lines. So if you're going out the checkout line you don't have to hold this up to a little scanner. It's also in those keepups you use at the gas station, to swipe your information into. But that same helpful technology can also be used to gather information without your knowledge. We are not talking about the kind of people (who) lift your wallet, we are talking about another kind of pickpocket out there. Walt Augustinowicz is with ID Stronghold. His company makes plastic protective sleeves that can keep your information from getting transmitted without your permission. But he says electronic pick pocketing is easily done. Because it's a radio you just get near someone with one of these radars and you can actually skim off their credit card number, their expiration dates. Using a \$10 credit card reader he bought on eBay, he demonstrates how it can happen. One scan says pickpockets can download your sensitive information but RFIDs experts say it's not that bad. The credit card companies usually flag fraudulent activity and require the security number on credit cards and home addresses as additional safeguard.

Now there is an anti skimming law in California which makes the use of this RFID cards for skimming punishable with up one year in prison and there is also a fine but the FTC is still concerned. They say the unauthorized gathering of information with these cards is an emerging threat, so you've got to protect your information. There is always going to be two sides to this : there is the benefit and then there is the risk and I think that's the nature of technology. This is Ric Romeo , abc 7, abc news.

For more information on how to protect yourself from pickpockets you can log onto abc7.com.