



## Gas pumps easy targets for fraudsters

**Gas stations have become vulnerable to skimming devices that illegally capture consumers' credit or debit card information from the card's magnetic strip to create counterfeit cards.**

In Florida alone, 127 skimmers were found at its gas stations this year, reported PalmBeachPost.com.

They have also been found for the first time in California, according to Steven Scarince, a Los Angeles-based U.S. Secret Service agent.

Making illegal purchases using counterfeit cards is easier to carry out in gas stations as they are usually unattended.

Counterfeit cards are also used by thieves to fill up "bladder trucks", tanks hidden inside the vehicle and can contain hundreds of gallons of gas, which will then be sold to fly-by-night gas stations or construction sites, according to a Dow Jones News Service report.

The report further said that the gas station industry lost approximately \$250 million while the card industry lost around \$500 million on fuel-related fraud in 2013.

In response to this, gas stations have been beefing up their security by putting up fraud-proof equipment. However, tighter measures coming from Visa and Mastercard won't be applicable to gas stations until 2017.

Card payments account to more than 50% of all gas purchases in the U.S., according to California-based Nilson Report.