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Thieves using aluminum foil to rip off businesses, credit card companies

Thieves are finding a new way to scam Kansas City businesses, and police want retailers to beware.

Since Saturday, Sept. 21, KCPD has received three (a possible fourth is being investigated) reports of suspects covering satellite dishes with foil that stores use to process credit card information. Doing so interferes with transmitting the credit card transactions from the satellite to the credit card companies. In essence, this allows thieves with counterfeit, maxed-out or stolen credit cards to have a completely open line of credit to purchase as much as they want. No verification that typically takes place in a credit card transaction is present.

Suspects have climbed onto the roofs of businesses across the city this past weekend: in the 6200 block of St. John Ave., 8700 block of NW 112th St. and the 2100 block of E. 39th St. In the St. John Avenue theft, the suspect used a fraudulent credit card to purchase \$1,665 worth of cigarettes.

Kansas City Police have indicated that foil has been discovered covering the satellites on the roofs of each of those businesses. They want retailers who transmit credit card information or lottery transactions by satellite to be aware of this scam. If business owners or managers find their satellite covered with foil, they should contact police immediately. Do not remove it until after officers come so police can process the crime scene.

KCPD's Fraud Section is researching how widespread this scam is in other parts of the country. The below pictures are from another jurisdiction where such a theft took place, and they give business owners and managers an idea of what to look for. Owners and managers also should be on the look-out for anyone climbing on their building's roof.

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