ATM DEVICE THEFT & ATM GAS ATTACKS:

INFORMATION & ADVICE FOR BUSINESSES

Safer Communities, Specialist Crime Division
December 2018
Introduction
This guidance is intended to assist the banking and retail industry with information on commercial premises Automated Teller Machine (ATM) device theft and ATM Gas Attacks. It provides information about reasonable preventative steps you can take, safety advice and guidance in respect of your actions should an incident happen.

Background
There have recently been a number of incidents across Scotland whereby criminals have broken into commercial premises with the intention of stealing ATM devices situated within premises and any cash contained within.

This should be considered against a backdrop crime trend across the UK, whereby ATMs are attacked using explosive gas in order to gain access to money within.

General Prevention Advice
No matter how good you think your business security is, it is prudent to consider reasonable preventative steps you can take to increase security.

CCTV Coverage
If you do have a CCTV System installed:

- Ensure your CCTV system in good working order and the time and date stamp on recordings is correct. Aim to rectify any faults immediately they become apparent.
- Check your CCTV cameras DAILY to make sure they have not been interfered with.
- Ensure the recording system is kept secure to avoid third party tampering.
- Ensure the till area and ATM are recorded.
- Ensure the system can obtain clear images of persons entering the premises and a person could be identified from the recorded images.
• Ensure there are staff members on the premises who are trained to operate the equipment, especially to provide recorded images to Police if required.

• Ensure CCTV is supported by compliant signage which may also act as a deterrent.

ATMs
• Ensure any internal ATM is so situated that it would be difficult for it to be removed or pulled from the premises by a vehicle (i.e. situated away from doors and windows).

• If there is an internal ATM machine on the premises, ensure it is emptied overnight and that clear signage is in place which states this.

• Regularly inspect your ATM(s) to determine if it has been interfered with in any way.

• Ensure CCTV covers your internal / external ATM(s) and obtains clear images of the face of the person using the ATM.

• If an externally accessed ATM or the premises doorway is protected by security bollards, ensure remedial action is taken if these become accidentally damaged.

Hostile Reconnaissance
Thieves may visit premises before a crime to check internal and / or external security:

• Be alert to persons paying attention to your security system / CCTV, or even lingering in the vicinity of the areas where security devices such as door / window contacts / Passive Infra-Red (PIR) detectors are installed.

• Ask staff members to actively challenge persons acting suspiciously.

• Ask staff members to actively challenge contractors for ID.

• Ensure staff members are in a position to note a description of someone who they are suspicious of and know how to deal with it in a timely manner.
Alarm Systems

Alarm Systems are an excellent deterrent, especially remotely monitored systems:

• Ensure your alarm system is regularly maintained, tested and working.

• Train staff members to properly secure your premises and set the alarm system correctly at the end of the working day.

• Regularly check alarm detectors / sensors to ensure they are operational.

• Ensure staff members know where the alarm detectors are situated in order that they can identify whether any person has interfered with them.

• Ensure staff member know what happens if the alarm is activated. Will someone be notified or attend at the premises?

• Make neighbours aware of what your intruder alarm sounds like, and who to inform if it is activated.

Recent Trends in ATM Crime

Analysis indicates that criminals are using hostile surveillance on premises and interfering with CCTV cameras prior to returning later to breach or steal the device.

ATMs are being targeted by criminals breaking into premises who then remove the internally situated ATM, often with the assistance of a vehicle to pull the device from the premises.

In other cases, ATMs have been breached in situ by gas attack. The cash dispenser slot is broken and may also be stuffed with some sort of wadding, possibly dowsed in petrol. Gas is then piped into the device from cylinders and ignited from a distance.
The level of damage caused by an ATM gas explosion can vary greatly. In some incidents the damage has been contained within the ATM, while in others the ATM has been completely destroyed causing significant damage to structures housing the ATM and surrounding buildings.

If an ATM has been subject to a gas attack, caution should be exercised due to the potential risk of explosion. Many factors can influence the potential scale of an ATM explosion. One obvious factor is the type and amount of gas used. During previous incidents, gas was piped into an ATM for around 40 minutes before the explosion was initiated. In others, the delay was less than two minutes.

**What should I do if I am suspicious or an incident happens?**

Trust your instincts. If you notice suspicious activity around an ATM device, the security features of your premises or anything untoward then contact the police by dialling 101 or, in the event of an emergency, by dialling 999.
Initial actions in the event of a gas attack

An ATM gas attack can result in a damage radius of 40 metres or more and clearly presents a significant risk to you and other members of the public.

Due to the use of explosive / flammable products to gain access to the ATM, police officers should initially place a 100m cordon around the machine. However, prior to the arrival of emergency services it is essential that no one approaches the ATM and that staff and members of the public remain at a safe distance. Ensure the safety of yourself, staff and customers.

If you discover evidence of an intended, failed or successfully executed gas attack, it is important that you tell the emergency services straight away and pass as much information on as you can.

Phone 999 and report:

- Details of where you are.
- Any other premises / residential buildings nearby.
- Any suspicious activity / vehicles / persons.
- Whether you smell any gas.
- Whether you see any piping / gas cylinders.
- Whether there been an explosion or there is any smoke near to the ATM.
- If you know, advise emergency services of the safest route avoiding the ATM.
- Advise if there is CCTV within your premises.

You will receive clear instructions from emergency services personnel but:

- Consider the potential for unexploded gas to be within or in the vicinity of the ATM. Note that some gases used may be heavier than air.
- Consider potential sources of ignition such as using mobile phones and lighting cigarettes close to the ATM.
Your Priorities:

• Ensure the safety of yourself, staff, customers and others in the vicinity.
• Prevent other members of the public entering the shop.
• Meet emergency services on their arrival and answer questions to the best of your knowledge - no detail is too small.
• Do everything directed by emergency services.
• Do not re-enter premises under any circumstances.
• Do not touch the ATM or any money that may have been left after an explosion unless absolutely necessary.
• Do not remove any piping from the ATM or touch the gas cylinder.

Further Information

For further guidance on how to protect your business from crime, contact Police Scotland on 101 or visit the Police Scotland website at www.scotland.police.uk

You can also learn more about business security advice and services by visiting the Scottish Business Resilience Centre website at enquiries@sbrcentre.co.uk

If you have information about crime or criminals which you wish to report, you can do so by contacting Police Scotland or you can also report anonymously and in confidence at www.crimestoppers-uk.org