

Security Awareness Campaign at Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust

The ICTS Security Team at Epsom and St Helier gave patients and staff at the hospitals a masterclass in keeping their belongings safe recently, during a two-day awareness campaign.

The theme of the campaign was the importance of keeping contents of handbags and wallets secure. During the course of an hour, the ICTS Security Management team based at the hospitals, met with NHS staff, contractors and the general public, explaining the importance of only taking necessary items with them to work and to make sure that they didn't have too many items containing personal details in handbags and wallets.

The ICTS team demonstrated how easy it is for criminals to scan RFID (Radio Frequency Identification Devices), such as bank cards and passports, to obtain bank and personal details.

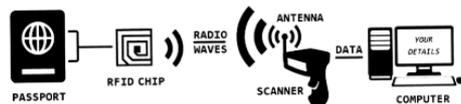
WHAT IS RFID?

RFID stands for Radio Frequency Identification Devices. Today they are found in passports and credit cards as wafer-thin chips to help speed up transactions. They store and transmit your account information plus personal details. So where does RFID blocking come in?

Handheld scanners (which thieves can easily come by) can read these chips through wallets and clothing up to several feet away. Think of it as electronic pickpocketing or identity theft. Newly issued credit cards, passports, and other IDs have embedded RFID chips.

Identity theft via RFID readers is growing. You can protect your personal data with the use of RFID blocking wallets and RFID blocking passport covers. These items contain a metal fibre mesh that makes a "cage" around the chip that radio waves cannot penetrate.

Credit and identification cards now have RFID technology embedded into them. Most newly issued Passports have RFID chips in them. The chip contains all the data that is on the first page of your passport including your photo. Even your driver's license can have an RFID chip.



How Does RFID Work?

RFID, Radio Frequency Identification, is the technology that lets you simply wave your credit or identification card, passport or license in front of a nearby scanner instead of having to slide the magnetic stripe through it. The electronic scanner sends a signal which is received by an antenna embedded into the card, which is connected to the card's RFID chip, thus activating it. Unfortunately, criminals with minimal technical skills can construct their own RFID readers with a few simple supplies.

These devices can steal your private financial information quickly and silently, all the perpetrator needs to do is come near your wallet with the hidden card reader. You wouldn't know it at all.

Does my Card Have an RFID Chip?

If your card is equipped with PayWave or blink, indicated by a logo on the front or back of the card, then it has an RFID chip embedded in it. The absence of a PayPass logo, however, does not mean that your card does not have an RFID chip—call the customer service number on the back of your card to verify if your card is RFID chipped.

If you cannot get an answer from your bank you should protect your cards anyway to ensure that you do not fall victim to identity theft. Imagine how the theft of your identity while travelling could negatively impact your trip! You should be concerned if you carry an American Express Card, Visa, Discover, MasterCard or a passport.

Security Contract Manager at the hospitals, Paul Grzegorzec, said: “Every year, more than 500,000 come to the hospitals for care and treatment - that means that our buildings are very busy places and are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In these busy and open surroundings, it’s vital that staff and patients know how to keep their possessions safe and can take some basic steps to help protect themselves against crime. Of course, our security teams are on site at the hospitals around the clock and are always on hand to help, but we do need people to be aware of the potential risks and make sure they are doing what they can to keep their belongings secure.”

Image below: Security Awareness Campaign



The events were held in the hospital restaurants so as to receive maximum exposure and our Security Officers handed out leaflets whilst on patrol across the hospital wards. To further encourage engagement, prizes were given out to those who had three items or fewer in their handbags or wallets.

Future ICTS Security Awareness Campaigns at the Hospitals will feature: Bike/Motorcycle Security (October 2019), Car Security (November 2019), Keeping your Home Safe during the Festive Period (December 2019).

ICTS has been working in partnership with Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust for over a decade. During this time, we have fostered a keen understanding of the Trust’s core values and we have worked hard to promote them whilst forging a *one team* approach.