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World Cup 2018 Visitors, Beware of Fake ATM Machine Scam

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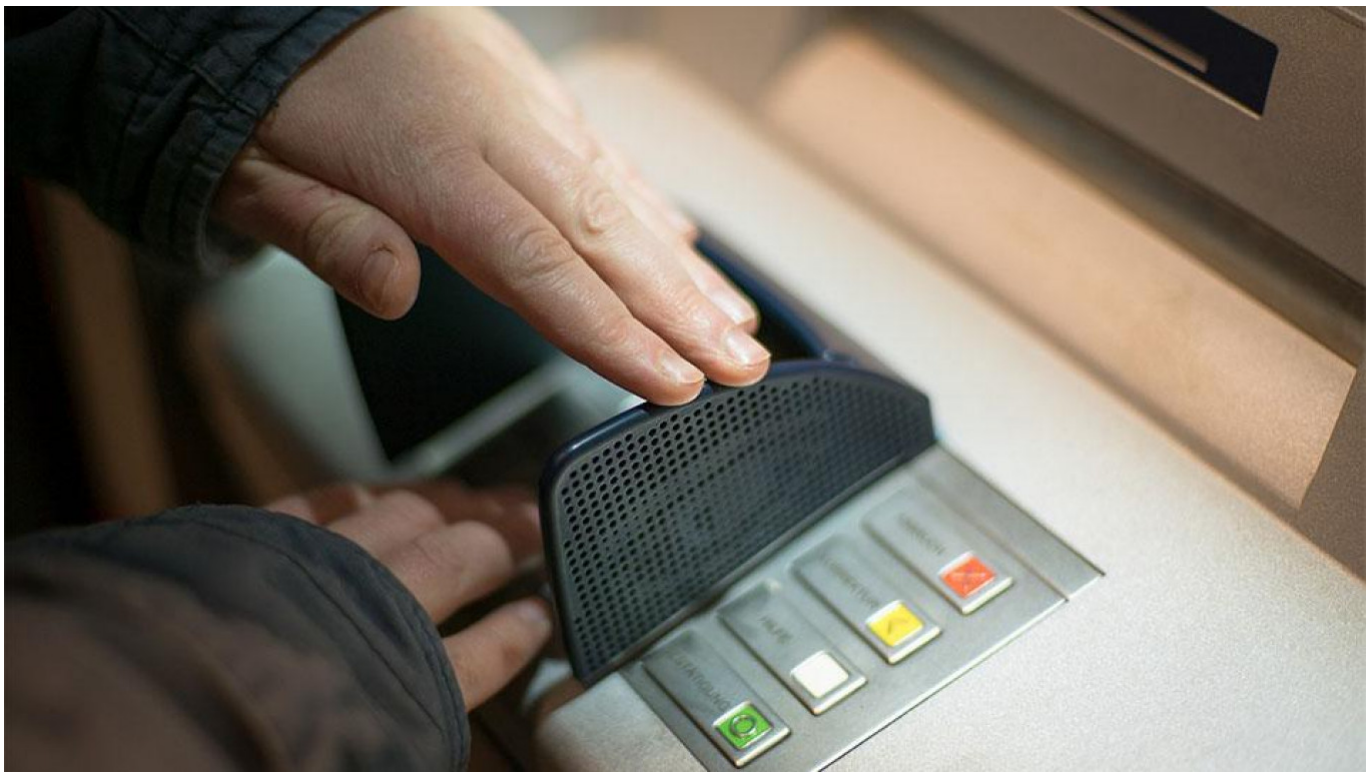

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A scam involving fake ATM machines could hit thousands of visitors planning to visit Russia during the 2018 FIFA World Cup this summer, law enforcement officials have warned.

Based on ticket sales and requests, at least 1.5 million foreign tourists are expected to visit Russia during the World Cup between June 14 and July 15. Last week, Russia's Central Bank issued a set of recommendations ahead of the competition, urging card owners to avoid "malfunctioning" ATMs, among other suggestions.

Related article: Russia Blacklists Hotels Guilty of Inflating Prices for World Cup

A Russian law enforcement official has told the Kommersant business daily that fake ATM machines installed in the 11 World Cup host cities in Russia will pose a "significant problem" for visitors.

“Our residents usually use the same ATM and are unlikely to try to withdraw money from a suspicious and unfamiliar device. Newcomers, however, can find it difficult to tell the difference between a fake ATM from a real one,” the official was cited as saying by Kommersant.

Scammers are buying retired ATM machines for up to 100,000 rubles ($1,700) and refitting them to target tourists, the source said.

According to digital security consultant Andrei Gayko, fraudulent ATMs can be made to “mimic a popular bank’s machine.”

“If it doesn’t arouse suspicion from anyone, it can continue to work for a very long time,” he said.

Meanwhile, Russian banks have learned how to prevent ATM skimming, a type of fraud in which perpetrators steal information from customers’ bank cards to make fake cards, Kommersant reported.

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