[**RFID Blocking for Credit Cards**](http://www.idstronghold.com/default.asp) (http://www.idstronghold.com/default.asp)

RFID, Radio Frequency Identification, is the technology that lets you simply wave your credit 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.

**RFID and Credit Cards**

The RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) chip in a credit card emits the account number, expiration data and other information.

Just like a submarine uses sonar to seek out a ship it’s trying to sink, the criminals send a radio signal or “ping” from a standard checkout contactless card reader purchased online for under $100. The victim’s credit cards’ antennae automatically answer the call by providing their card information. The criminal then uses this card information to make purchases.

About **100 million credit cards** now have this technology embedded into them. However, over the next 2-3 years, it is expected that credit card issuers will replace every single magnetic stripe credit and debit card with a new contactless smartcard. The new cards seem to make it all easier. So much easier that identity thieves are reading your credit cards before you even take them out of your wallet. RFID technology has made identity theft quite literally a stroll in the park. Where credit card "Skimming" used to require the thief to get his hands on your card, acquiring your personal data is now as easy as passing you on the street.

**RFID readers**

Readers are employed by convenience stores, pharmacies, restaurants, fast food markets, and many other places of business. Credit card companies say it keeps your identity safer, because your card is never in the hands of a stranger. Readers include safety features to keep your data from being intercepted once it has been read from your card.

However, these same readers can be freely purchased and attached to a laptop with very little technical knowledge required. They’ve even created cell phones with built in card readers that can steal your information. How many times have you walked by someone carrying a briefcase? Would you even be suspicious? By simply walking past you, this person acquires your credit card number, expiration date and more.

**All US passports issued since October 2006** also have RFID chips in them. The chip contains all the data that is on the first page including your photo. It has been shown that hackers can determine what country a passport has been issued from without even reading all the data on it, simply by recognizing the way the chip responds to certain scans.

**How to Protect Yourself**

You can buy a sleeve from Walgreens or Amazon, among others, which will provide a barrier to prevent a RFID reader from accessing the data on your credit card or passport. If you're simply looking for a bit of casual protection, simply stacking your cards next to each other will help in reducing their strength.