



USC University of Southern California

June 28, 2012

Dear USC Faculty, Staff, Students, and Visitors:

The university recently identified a security breach affecting credit card purchases made at food outlets on the USC University Park and Health Sciences campuses.

We are still investigating this matter but we want to share with you what we have discovered to date.

Credit card numbers were obtained illegally through a breach in a third-party software system used to process credit card transactions in some USC dining halls, including Ronald Tutor Campus Center, Seeds, the Lab on Figueroa St. and Starbucks on the Health Sciences Campus during the period from May 21 to June 21, and possibly earlier.

Only credit card numbers were exposed. No personally identifiable information was compromised.

Upon learning of the breach, the university promptly disabled the compromised system.

The university has notified the vendor of the security breach and has requested that the vendor take appropriate corrective actions to secure its system.

USC's Department of Public Safety and the Los Angeles Police Department are investigating the incident.

If you recently used your credit card at a USC dining facility, we recommend that you check carefully all credit card statements that you receive over the next several months, and as a precautionary measure, that you also check statements for the past several months for any unusual charges. If you discover unauthorized or suspicious activity in any of these accounts, contact your credit card company or other account issuer immediately. By law, you should not be liable for any unauthorized charges.

The FAQ below provides additional information about the incident. You can also call the customer service center at 213.821.1863 if you have questions.

We apologize for any inconvenience or concern that this notification may cause. As a member of our Trojan family or a visitor to our campus, we want to ensure that we do all that we can to maintain your trust and confidence. The university takes these matters very seriously and we will do all that we can to prevent such breaches in future.

Sincerely,

Dan Stimmler
Associate Senior Vice President
USC Auxiliary Services

Questions and Answers about Theft of Credit Card Numbers Used at USC

What numbers were stolen, where and when?

Access was gained to a third-party software system that is used to process credit card transactions at some USC food venues, including those at the Ronald Tutor Campus Center, the Lab, Seeds and Starbucks on the Health Sciences Campus.

USC engaged Ernst & Young to conduct a forensic investigation to determine the duration of unauthorized access and the number of credit card transactions exposed. To date, we believe that impacted transactions occurred between May 21 and June 21, but we have not ruled out earlier instances.

How was the problem discovered?

USC's Department of Public Safety received calls from several individuals reporting credit card fraud who had recently purchased food at the above locations.

USC Auxiliary Services investigated the complaints, confirmed that the system had been compromised and stopped use of the system to process credit card charges on June 21.

What if I purchased food by credit card at USC after June 21?

The compromised system has been disabled and will remain offline until the university can be sure that the security breach has been fixed and data is secure.

What information was compromised?

The information consisted only of credit card numbers. No personally identifiable information was exposed. As a result, cardholders are not at risk of identity theft from this incident.

Does this incident affect my USCard?

No, USCard information was not compromised. This incident should not affect your continued use of the USCard.

What do I do if someone used my credit card number without my knowledge?

Check your credit card statements carefully. Immediately report any unauthorized charges to your credit card company. Your credit card company will instruct you on your options to further protect or replace your card.

Am I responsible for any fraudulent charges?

By federal law, you should not be responsible for charges made using a stolen credit card number while the card itself remains in your possession. More information on what to do if your credit card is compromised is available at <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/credit/cre04.shtm>

How will you notify everyone who may have been affected?

The university is notifying faculty, students, and staff directly. We also have posted the notification on the USC web site and distributed the link through the media and our social media channels.

We are unable to notify all potentially impacted individuals directly because the names of the credit card holders are known only to the banks that issued the credit cards. For privacy reasons, the issuing banks will not share names and contact information of the credit card holders.