



*Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
Department of Transitional Assistance*

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**Online Guide Transmittal 2022-60  
July 20, 2022**

**To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff**  
**From: Sarah Stuart, Associate Commissioner for Change Management**  
**Re: Cross Programs: EBT Security**

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**Overview**

Due to an increase in the theft of benefits stored on EBT cards, additional steps are necessary to help secure SNAP, TAFDC, EAEDC and P-EBT benefits. Keeping EBT card information protected is necessary to prevent the loss of cash assistance, SNAP, and P-EBT benefits.

The Department is instructing clients to re-PIN their EBT card prior to each benefit issuance. All cash clients must be informed that direct deposit is a safer way to receive TAFDC and EAEDC.

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**Purpose**

The purpose of this transmittal is to advise staff of steps being taken and changes in policy and procedure to help protect DTA benefits from theft.

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**EBT  
Schemes**

DTA and its investigations team have become aware of banks and retailers who appear to have had their ATMs and card processing terminals compromised. These scams are aimed at obtaining credit, debit, and EBT card information and Personal Identification Numbers (PINs). Skimming is the use of an electronic device to steal card information from a card reader and create a fake card, known as cloning, to steal money or benefits.

There have also been reports of a phishing scam where people are receiving scam text messages or calls, as well as scam links to a website where they are asked to provide their card and PIN information.

This is impacting SNAP, TAFDC, EAEDC and P-EBT clients.

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## How to Protect DTA Benefits

All clients regardless of program are being strongly encouraged to re-PIN their EBT and/or P-EBT cards at least one day before each benefit issuance, using a different PIN from any previous PINs. Clients should not share their card information or PIN and should not let anyone see them entering their PIN at a machine.

### How clients set a new EBT PIN:

1. Call the number on the back of the EBT card: 800-997-2555.
2. Choose the preferred language.
3. Enter the number on the front of the card.
4. Press 2 to PIN the EBT card.
5. When asked for the last 4 digits of the Social Security Number (SSN), enter them. If a client does not have an SSN, they enter the last 4 digits of the 99 number assigned by DTA.
6. Enter you're the Date of Birth (month/day/year – 2 digits for month, 2 digits for day, 4 digits for year). For example, 12 01 1989 for December 1, 1989.
7. Enter a NEW 4-digit PIN; then enter it again. **Choose a different PIN from any previous PINs.**

P-EBT cards are also at risk of skimming. Re-PINing P-EBT card procedures are similar to those above. Caregivers calling need to have the last 4 digits of the **child's case number**. Additional P-EBT information and how to request a new P-EBT card can be found at <https://www.map-ebt.org/>

Clients do not need to receive a new card to safely access their benefits. Clients who receive TAFDC or EAEDC cash benefits can also receive their benefits through direct deposit if they have a bank account.

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**Compromised  
Cards**

The Central Case Management Office (CCMO) is proactively re-PINing any EBT card identified as likely to have been cloned to prevent the theft of benefits. This process will initiate Conduent to send a notice to the client with the new PIN. Clients may call the number on the back of their card and set a PIN of their own choosing, provided it has been at least one hour after the CCMO re-PIN request has been made. The CCMO will enter a detailed narrative including information such as communication with clients who have HLS, whether the card has had a new PIN requested, and whether benefits have been replaced.

Designated local office staff will assist with calling clients to make them aware of the re-PIN and if a notice is attached to the Narrative tab, will print and mail it. Staff will enter a detailed narrative of the outcome of the attempted contact and confirmation that the letter was mailed. This letter advises clients of the re-PIN and why this step was taken. The letter will be available to CCMO staff to generate through BEACON in the near future.

All staff must assist any clients that inquire about EBT skimming and re-PINing. It is critical that all staff review the Narrative tab to determine what, if any, action has been taken relative to skimming so that they may properly assist the client.

Staff are to continue sending cases they believe were impacted to DTA.ReportFraud@MassMail.State.MA.US following the procedures outlined under prior communications. Staff are not to send cases or direct clients to any other business units as this delays the review of their case, unless the narrative from the CCMO specifies otherwise.

Cases with HLS or certain CAC-Only accommodation will be handled by CCMO staff in coordination with the associated local office specialist.

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**Client  
Communications**

The Department is notifying clients, retailers, and community partners of these changes. Communication has included:

- Updates to the [DTA website](#)
  - Text message
  - Social media posts
  - A new handout for all clients who walk in
  - A new insert which will be included in all mailings in the near future
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**Questions**

If you have any policy or procedural questions, after conferring with the appropriate TAO personnel, please have your Systems Information Specialists or TAO management email them to DTA.Procedural Issues.

Systems issues should be directed to the Systems Support Help Desk.

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