

The Virgin Islands Consortium

V.I. Beware: Home Depot In-Store Payments System Breach

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Ernice Gilbert **September 09, 2014**



On Monday, Home Depot confirmed that hackers had broken into its in-store payments systems, in what could be the largest breach of the retailer's computer network, affecting possibly over 60 million customers.

The breach may have affected any customer at Home Depot stores in the United States and Canada from April to early last week, said Paula Drake, a company spokeswoman. Customers at Home Depot's Mexico stores were not affected, nor were online shoppers at HomeDepot.com.

The U.S. Virgin Islands' status remained uncertain this morning. The *VI Consortium* reached out to the stores on St. Croix and St. Thomas; however, workers could not confirm if the security breach have affected local shoppers.

One upper-level employee at the St. Croix branch named Jim, who did not wish to reveal his last name, said he did not know if his store was affected. On St. Thomas, Nika, the assistant manager, who also did not wish to reveal her last name, said her store was also in the dark on the matter. Both employees directed the *VI Consortium* to call back once the store managers had reported for work later today.

"We apologize for the frustration and anxiety this causes our customers, and I want to thank them for their patience and support as we work through this issue," said Frank Blake, chairman and chief executive officer of Home Depot, in a release.

"We owe it to our customers to alert them that we now have enough evidence to confirm that a breach has indeed occurred. It's important to emphasize that no customers will be responsible for fraudulent charges to their accounts," parts of the statement read.

The *VI Consortium* will update this story once there is a clear understanding from local Home Depot store managers on the impact of its in-store payments systems breach on local shoppers.