

Tourists targeted by thieves posing as police officers



Police are urging the public to be wary of a group of thieves who have this week been posing as police officers in an attempt to steal cash from tourists.

Three similar incidents were reported in the past few days in the capital – in Princes Street, St Andrews Square and Johnston Terrace – that saw foreign visitors become the victims of the theft of some money.

Detective Sergeant Willie Falconer, who is based at Gayfield station, explained: “All of the incidents are very alike and there is clearly a group of thieves using the same tactic to try and make off with cash from unsuspecting tourists.

“On Thursday in St Andrews Square, for example, we received a report from a woman after she was approached by a Mediterranean/dark European looking man posing as a tourist. The man and woman were soon approached by another two men who were of Asian appearance and presented themselves as police officers.

“The so-called police officers then asked to see their wallets on the pretext of checking for counterfeit currency and identification. They took some cash from the wallets, appeared to sniff the money, replace it and then handed the wallets back.

“But after the three men left, the woman discovered that there was £140 missing from her wallet.” Enquiries are ongoing into the incidents and Sergeant Falconer is appealing to the public to come forward with any details that may assist the investigation, while also warning tourists to be on their

guard.

He added: "These crimes are being carried out so quickly that the victims are being duped into thinking the cash is still in their wallets or purses.

"We take crimes of theft and impersonating police officers very seriously and will do our utmost to catch the culprits. Anyone with information can contact Police Scotland on 101 or, alternatively, the charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111."