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Utility scams are on the rise. See press release below and two useful images attached that help people look for the telltale signs of scams and new tactics criminals are using.

Please click [here](#) to view a 25 second “scam alert” video.

Help #StopScams.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#StopScams

PSE&G Continues to Raise Awareness During Utility Scam Awareness Week

(Newark, N.J. — Nov. 16, 2020) PSE&G joins Utilities United Against Scams (UUAS) to recognize the fifth annual Utility Scam Awareness Week Nov. 16 - 20. National Scam Awareness Week is an advocacy and awareness campaign focused on educating customers and exposing the tactics used by scammers.

“This year has presented many challenges, and scammers prey on us when we are distracted,” said Fred Daum, executive director of Customer Operations, Customer Services, PSE&G. “We are pleased to participate in the UUAS awareness campaign to educate and help decrease the number of customers that fall victim to the scammers.”

Signs of potential scam activity:

- **Threat to disconnect:** Scammers may aggressively tell the customer their utility bill is past due and service will be disconnected if a payment is not made – usually within an hour.
- **Request for immediate payment:** Scammers may instruct the customer to use cash or purchase a prepaid card, a gift card or even Bitcoin, and then to call back to make a phone payment to the utility company, or to receive instructions for an in-person meeting, supposedly at a utility customer center. Often, after the customer makes the first payment, the scammer will call back and request the payment be resubmitted due to an error with the amount. The scammer refers to a new amount and claims that the original payment will be refunded. Sometimes they will call a third time to say the payment did not go through and to resubmit again.
- **In person-demands:** Scammers may arrive at a home or business, flash a fake ID and/or claim to be a utility collection representative. The impostors may wear “uniforms” or affix false company signs to their vehicles. The scammers generally ask for personal information, something authentic utility representatives do not do, or offer bogus discounts.

- **Request for card information:** If a customer calls back with the requested information, the caller asks the customer for the prepaid card's number or giftcard PIN, which grants the scammer instant access to the card's funds, and the victim's money is gone.
- **Priority meter installs:** Recent phone scams reported to PSE&G include demands for payment for past-due bills, discounts for good payment history or requiring a deposit for a priority meter installation. PSE&G does not require a deposit for meter installations. Often scammers will threaten to disconnect electric service if payment is not made immediately. These scammers often demand payment through a pre-paid card (e.g. Green Dot Money Pak, Vanilla Reload Card) or Bitcoin. If the victim takes the bait, the scammer provides a telephone number where a fake representative requests additional information that completes the fraudulent transaction.

"Customers need to be on high alert as we continue to see impostor utility scams rise across North America," said UUAS Executive Director Monica Martinez. "Scammers demand money or personal information on the spot—usually with threatening language—and indicate that service will be disconnected immediately. Anyone and everyone, from senior households to small business owners, is at risk of being targeted."

Protect yourself against scams:

Be alert to the telltale sign of a scam: someone asking by telephone or email for payment in pre-paid debit cards or through a MoneyGram transfer, or to send money to an out-of-state address. Never arrange payment or divulge account or personal information, including Social Security numbers or debit or credit card information, over the telephone unless you are certain you are speaking to a PSE&G representative.

Customers should also know what PSE&G will and won't discuss over the phone. A genuine PSE&G representative will ask to speak to the "Customer of Record." If that person is available, the representative will explain why they are calling and provide the account name, address and current balance. If the person on the phone does not provide the correct information, it is likely the customer is not speaking with a PSE&G representative.

If the "Customer of Record" is not available, the PSE&G representative will not discuss the account at all and ask that a message be left for the "Customer of Record" to call 1-800-436-PSEG (7734).

If a customer has doubts about the legitimacy of a call or an email — especially one in which payment is requested — call the company directly at 1-800-436-PSEG (7734).

PSE&G is a member of the UUAS collaborative. UUAS, a consortium of more than 145 U.S. and Canadian electric, water, and natural gas utilities and their respective trade associations, has helped to create awareness of common and new scam tactics and to cease operations of nearly 5,000 toll-free numbers used against utility customers by scammers.

For more information on various payment scams reported in the PSE&G service area and around the country, visit <https://nj.myaccount.pseg.com/customersupport/scamsandfraud>

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PSE&G

Public Service Electric & Gas Co. (PSE&G) is New Jersey's oldest and largest gas and electric delivery public utility, serving three-quarters of the state's population. PSE&G is the winner of the ReliabilityOne Award for superior electric system reliability in the Mid-Atlantic region. In 2020, PSE&G was named the most trusted combined gas & electric utility in the East Region, by the Cogent Syndicated Brand Trust Index. PSE&G is a subsidiary of Public Service Enterprise Group Inc. (PSEG) (NYSE:PEG), a diversified energy company. PSEG has been named to the Dow Jones Sustainability Index for North America for 12 consecutive years (www.pseg.com).

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SCAMS AWARENESS WEEK

**KNOW
THE
SIGNS.**

#StopScams

UTILITIES UNITED
AGAINST SCAMS



Slow down

Take your time. Scammers pressure customers to act fast.



Verify

Scammers often pose as the utility. Always verify the info being provided to you matches your latest bill.



Stop

Utilities never demand immediate payment and do not accept bitcoin, prepaid cards, or third-party payment apps.

TACTICS:

- **Fraudulent phone numbers:** Scammers are claiming the phone number is different than the number listed on the utility bill due to telework status.
- **Fraudulent emails and texts:** Scammers are using written correspondence to portray themselves as the utility.
- **Door-to-door impostors:** Scammers are claiming they are “responding to reports that scammers are in the neighborhood.”



SCAMS:

- **Disconnection threat:** The utility or government representative impostor aggressively tells the customer his or her account is past due and service will be disconnected if immediate payment is not made—typically using a prepaid debit card or another non-refundable form of payment.
- **Meter payment:** The caller or in-person scammer instructs the customer to pay with cash or a prepaid debit card to cover the costs of a new meter or a meter upgrade.
- **Information request:** The caller insists that a recent payment encountered a system glitch and was not completed—the scammer then asks the customer to make a false payment using a prepaid debit card or by providing personal account information.



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