



FOR RELEASE

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PSE&G Raises Awareness of Scams During National Consumer Protection Week

Utility warns customers to be alert for requests for payments via popular fund transfer apps

(NEWARK, N.J. – March 1, 2021) PSE&G encourages customers to learn how to spot the signs of fraud and scams, and report them.

This week PSE&G joins Utilities United Against Scams (UUAS) to recognize National Consumer Protection Week, which aims to educate customers on how they can guard against becoming victims of impostor utility scams.

“Protecting our customers is a top priority. It is critically important we continue to raise awareness and educate customers about how to stop and spot potential scams,” said Fred Daum, executive director, Customer Operations for PSE&G. “Scammers continue to adapt and develop increasingly sophisticated tactics to take advantage of our customers.”

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, scammers have increased calls, texts, emails and in-person tactics, and they continue to contact utility customers asking for immediate payment to avoid service disconnection. PSE&G doesn’t send a single notification to a customer within one hour of a service disconnection. The company will also never ask customers to make payments with a prepaid debit card, gift card, any form of cryptocurrency or third-party digital payment via fund transfer applications.

PSE&G does not accept payments through prepaid debit cards or fund transfer applications. PSE&G offers a variety of payment options and would never require one specific type of payment.

As a member of UUAS — consortium of 146 U.S. and Canadian electric, water and natural gas utilities and their respective trade associations — PSE&G works across the industry with regulators, law enforcement, and telecommunications partners to stop scams targeting utility customers.

UUAS and its member companies continue to create awareness of common and new scam tactics and, to date, have helped to cease operations of more than 10,000 toll-free numbers used against utility customers by scammers.

“Even in the middle of a pandemic that is affecting everyone and causing economic hardship for many, we still are dealing with scammers who are preying on families and small businesses,” said UUAS Executive Director Monica Martinez. “UUAS is working directly with utility companies to help educate customers so they can be aware of and avoid utility scams during these trying times. We

are shutting down fraudulent toll-free numbers, highlighting current and common scam tactics, and providing resources to customers to help them better protect themselves from the impostors who attempt to steal their money and their peace of mind.”

Recent phone scams reported to PSE&G include demands for payment for past-due bills or priority meter installations. Often scammers will threaten to disconnect electric service if payment is not made immediately.

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 purchase a prepaid card, a gift card or even Bitcoin, and then to call them back — supposedly to make a phone payment to the utility company. They may request that the customer use a payment app to make an online payment — or even give instructions for an in-person meeting, supposedly at a utility customer center. Many times after the customer makes the first payment, the scammer will call back to ask for the payment to 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, which real utility representatives do not do, or offer bogus discounts.
- **Request for card information:** If a customer calls back with requested information, the caller asks the customer for the prepaid card’s number or gift-card 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 cards 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.

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 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).

For more information on various payment scams reported in the PSE&G service area and around the country, visit pseg.com/scamalert.

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