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FOR RELEASE

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PSE&G Encourages Customers to #StopScams *Stay Alert to In-Person & Phone Scams, Other Fraudulent Activity*

(NEWARK, N.J. – November 18, 2018) Public Service Electric & Gas Co., New Jersey’s largest utility, is encouraging its customers to be on guard against scammers who use in-person and phone methods to trick people into paying money they do not owe. Nov. 17-23 is National Scam Awareness Week. Raising awareness against scams and about the PSE&G payment process is part of an ongoing effort to stop scams, organized by the award-winning [Utilities United Against Scams](#), of which PSE&G is a member.

Wednesday, Nov. 20, marks Utility Scam Awareness Day, the 2019 theme for which is ‘It Happened to Me, Don’t Let it Happen to You.’ The day is supported by a week-long advocacy and awareness campaign, #StopScams, that raises awareness about trending scams including: in-person or phone demands for immediate payment; spoofing scams that mimic real phone numbers; pre-paid card scams; bitcoin scams; scams targeting small businesses; and email scams that contain fake bills and/or ask for personal information.

“According to the Federal Trade Commission, so far this year New Jerseyans submitted nearly 1.4 million fraud reports with an average loss of \$324 per victim,” said Fred Daum, PSE&G’s executive director of customer operations. “Scammers have become more brazen with their tactics and all customers need to be aware. It is our hope that information about scams will be widely shared throughout our service communities so no one falls prey to these unscrupulous people.”

UUAS has helped shut down nearly 5,000 toll-free numbers used against utility customers by scammers. UUAS’ publication, “Consumer’s Guide to Imposter Utility Scams,” is designed to help customers better protect themselves, their neighbors and loved ones from the harmful impacts of utility impostor scams. Scammers typically use three tactics – phone, in-person, or online – to target the money, property and personal information of utility customers. The [guide](#) includes helpful information such as:

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 less than an hour.

- **Request for immediate payment:** Scammers may instruct the customer to use cash or purchase a prepaid card, a gift card or even Bitcoins, and then to call them back supposedly to make a phone payment to the utility company, or to receive instructions for an in-person meeting, supposedly at a utility customer center.
- **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 fashion vehicle signage. 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.

How PSE&G customers may protect themselves:

- Customers should never purchase a prepaid card, gift card or use Bitcoins to avoid service disconnection or shutoff. Before terminating service, PSE&G alerts customers via messages on their bill, letters and phone calls. **PSE&G would never demand a specific type of payment nor threaten immediate service termination over the phone.** While there are many ways to pay a bill, the utility only accepts credit card and prepaid card payments through Western Union *Speedpay*, which charges a \$3.95 processing fee.
- If someone threatens immediate disconnection or shutoff of service, customers should hang up the phone, delete the text or email or shut the door. Customers with delinquent accounts receive an advance disconnection notification, typically by mail, included with their regular monthly bill. **PSE&G never sends a single notification one hour or less before disconnection.**
- Customers should never respond to an immediate demand for payment by agreeing to bring cash for an in-person meeting, particularly to a location not listed as a [customer service center](#) on the PSE&G website.
- If customers suspect someone is trying to scam them, they should hang up, delete the text or email, or shut the door. They should then call their utility company at the number on their monthly bill or the company’s website, not the phone number the scammer provides. If customers ever feel that they are in physical danger, they should call 911. Report all scam attempts by calling your utility and local police department, and file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission at www.ftc.gov/complaint.

More information about scams is available at pseg.com/scamalert. Visit www.utilitiesunited.org for more information and tips about how you can protect yourself from scams or follow along on Twitter: [@U_U_A_S](https://twitter.com/U_U_A_S) and Facebook: [@UtilitiesUnited](https://www.facebook.com/UtilitiesUnited) for the latest updates.

It's Utility Scam Awareness Week

Follow along with #StopScams for tips and updates.



Know the signs to #StopScams

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PSE&G

Public Service Electric and 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, as well as the 2018 Outstanding Customer Reliability Experience Award. 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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