

March 16, 2021**With Billing and Payment Scams on the Rise During the Pandemic,
PG&E Reminds Customers What They Can Do to Protect Themselves**

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. — With utility scams on the rise during the current pandemic, it is more important than ever for customers to be vigilant and to know what steps to take to prevent themselves or their families from falling victim.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, scammers have gotten deceptively creative with increased calls, texts, emails, and in-person tactics and are contacting electric and gas customers asking for immediate payment to avoid service disconnection. These impostors can be convincing and often target those who are most vulnerable, including senior citizens and low-income communities. They also aim their scams at small business owners during busy customer service hours. However, with the right information, customers can learn to detect and report these predatory scams.

As a reminder, PG&E will **never** contact a customer for the first time within one hour of a service disconnection, and will never ask customers to make payments with a pre-paid debit card, gift card, any form of cryptocurrency, or third-party digital payment mobile applications. Here are some steps customers can take to protect themselves and their families against being victimized:

Register for My Account

- PG&E reminds customers that they can visit PGE.com and register for My Account. Signing in will provide instant access to balance information, payment history and other account details and will provide a first line of defense against scammers.
- If a customer receives a call from someone requesting immediate payment, they can log in to My Account to confirm whether their account is in good standing.
- Customers can also call PG&E Customer Service at 800-743-5000 if they think that they are being targeted by a scam.

Add a Family Member to Your Account

- As an added layer of protection, customers can designate family members or another trusted individual to speak on their behalf to PG&E call center representatives.
- For example, an elderly parent could authorize an adult child to speak to PG&E on their behalf and make that person their first call should they receive a call threatening disconnection. The adult child could then call PG&E to confirm their account details.
- To designate an individual to speak to PG&E on your behalf, contact 800-743-5000.

“Scammers are constantly changing their tactics and tricks, so awareness is more important than ever to keep our customers safe,” said Melisa Munoz, PG&E Contact Center Operations Director. “If an email, visit to your home or phone call doesn’t feel right, don’t fall for it. Delete it, shut the door or hang up. And, as a reminder, PG&E will never ask for your financial information over the phone or via email.”

Signs of a potential scam

- **Threat to disconnect:** Scammers may aggressively demand immediate payment for an alleged past due bill. If this occurs, customers should hang up the phone, delete the email, or shut the door. Customers with delinquent accounts receive an advance disconnection notification, typically by mail and included with their regular monthly bill.
- **Request for immediate payment or a prepaid card:** Scammers may instruct the customer to purchase a prepaid card then call them back supposedly to make a bill payment. PG&E reminds customers that they should never purchase a prepaid card to avoid service disconnection or shutoff. PG&E does not specify how customers should make a bill payment and offers a variety of ways to pay a bill, including accepting payments online, by phone, automatic bank draft, mail or in person at an authorized PG&E neighborhood payment center.
- **Refund or rebate offers:** Scammers may say that your utility company overbilled you and owes you a refund, or that you are entitled to a rebate. Again, customers should immediately hang up and call PG&E Customer Service to confirm details.
- **“Spoofing” Authentic Numbers:** Scammers are now able to create authentic-looking 800 numbers which appear on your phone display. The numbers don’t lead back to PG&E if called back, however, so if you have doubts or have seen any of the above warning signs of a scam, hang up and call PG&E at 1-800-743-5000. If customers ever feel that they are in physical danger, they should call 911.

Customers who suspect that they have been victims of fraud, or who feel threatened during contact with one of these scammers, should contact local law enforcement. The Federal Trade Commission’s website is also a good source of information about how to protect personal information.

For more information about scams, visit www.pge.com and www.utilitiesunited.org.

About PG&E

Pacific Gas and Electric Company, a subsidiary of [PG&E Corporation](http://www.pge.com) (NYSE:PCG), is a combined natural gas and electric utility serving more than 16 million people across 70,000 square miles in Northern and Central California. For more information, visit pge.com and pge.com/news.

