

May 10, 2021**Be Aware of Scams Targeting PG&E Customers as You Race to Meet IRS Tax Deadline**

Customers Should Stay Vigilant to Recognize and Avoid Scams as Most Vulnerable, including Seniors, Low-Income Families, non-English Speakers and Small Business Owners Are Often Targeted

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. — With just a week left until the 2020 tax year filing deadline on May 17, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) warns customers to protect themselves from an increase in scams involving people posing as PG&E employees.

According to the IRS, scammers are impersonating utility workers to try to steal financial information from unsuspecting victims to file fraudulent tax returns in their names and then collect their refunds. These imposters can be convincing and are also stealing money from gas and electric customers by contacting them to ask for immediate payment to avoid service disconnection.

Scammers tend to target those who are most vulnerable and who may be particularly worried about potential disruption of their gas or electric service. Anyone can be a target, although scammers often prey on seniors, low-income families, non-English speakers, and small business owners.

"We urge customers to be extra vigilant during this time as criminals will use the tax filing deadline to create fear and scam unsuspecting victims, especially when a group of people is vulnerable or in a state of need," said Marlene Santos, Executive Vice President and Chief Customer Officer at PG&E. "Remember that PG&E will never ask for your financial information over the phone or via email, and will never demand immediate payment for an alleged past due bill."

In Foster City, a PG&E customer was scammed of \$1,000 on April 13 by someone impersonating a PG&E employee. This is just one of many scams reported to law enforcement and the company in recent weeks. However, in some cases, scams go unreported because the victims may be too embarrassed to tell anyone or report the fraud to the authorities.

With the right information, customers can learn to detect and report fraudulent activity. Here are some steps they can take to protect themselves and their families against being victimized:

- PG&E reminds customers that they can visit pge.com and register for Your Account. Signing in will provide instant access to balance information, payment history and other account details to confirm whether their account is in good standing.
- 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, including Zelle. (Also, note that PG&E has suspended customer

disconnections due to the pandemic through June 30, 2021.)

- PG&E never solicits personal information, banking information, credit card numbers or gift card numbers over the phone. If a caller asks for this information, or if you give out credit card or checking account information, report the incident to the credit card company, bank or the police, right away.
- If you're concerned about a call regarding a past due bill, service request or a request for personal information, call PG&E at 1-800-743-5000.
- Always ask to see an ID before allowing anyone who claims to be a PG&E representative inside your home. PG&E employees always carry identification. They are always willing to show it to you.
- Call the PG&E Customer Service line at 1-800-743-5000 if someone presents a PG&E identification and you still feel uneasy. You can use this number to verify a PG&E-scheduled service appointment or PG&E presence in the area.
- For scheduled PG&E service appointments, you will receive an automated or personal call from a gas service representative prior to a scheduled visit.

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 can 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.

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.

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

About PG&E

Pacific Gas and Electric Company, a subsidiary of PG&E Corporation (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.

