



SCAM ALERT: AEP SAYS CON MEN USING NEW TACTICS TO GET YOUR CASH

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CHARLESTON, WV (NEWS RELEASE) – Customers of Appalachian Power in West Virginia, Virginia and Tennessee continue to be targets of scam artists. The latest scam instructs customers to make an immediate payment or have their service disconnected.

Businesses seem to be particularly targeted in this latest scam. Customers are ordered to purchase prepaid debit cards, such as a Vanilla or Green Dot, and call a toll-free number to provide the card information.

Utility company scams unfortunately are common. This scam adds a new twist to previous tactics because the scammer goes to great lengths to make the phony toll-free number appear authentic to customers who may be skeptical. When customers dial the number, they hear a recording that sounds genuine — but it isn't.



"This tactic is very concerning because the number provided and the recording sound legitimate," said Jeri Matheney, Appalachian Power spokesperson.

While there are instances when Appalachian Power will contact customers over the phone, the company does not demand payment in this manner, Matheney said. "If customers receive suspicious, urgent, demanding phone calls from someone claiming to be with Appalachian Power or AEP, we suggest they hang up and contact us at the toll-free number listed on their bills, or call local law enforcement."

Appalachian Power's toll free numbers are provided on the company's website, www.AppalachianPower.com. In West Virginia, the toll free number for Appalachian Power is 800-982-4237; in Virginia, it is 800-956-4237; and in Tennessee, the toll free number is 800-967-4237.

Here are some tips consumers can use to stop a scammer:

- Confirm that you are speaking to a utility representative. If you have any concerns, tell the caller that you will independently check the phone number for the utility to verify the caller's identity and information.
- Be wary of anyone demanding immediate payment or payment in forms that are difficult to trace, such as Western Union, Vanilla or Green Dot cash cards.
- Never give your credit card, debit card, Social Security, ATM, checking or savings account numbers, or any other personal identification numbers to anyone who comes to your home, calls or sends an email requesting information.
- Never allow anyone claiming to be a utility service person into your home unless you have scheduled an appointment and the person has proper identification. Lock the door and contact police if you become concerned about your safety.

More tips can be found at <https://www.appalachianpower.com/account/bills/scams/>