

Utility Scam Awareness Day Aims to Educate Consumers

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Nov. 17, 2021 – Evergy will join more than 100 utility companies throughout North America to recognize the sixth annual Utility Scam Awareness Day. [Utilities United Against Scams \(UUAS\)](#) is part of the weeklong International Fraud Awareness Week, an advocacy and awareness campaign to educate consumers and small business owners about the tactics scammers use to attack consumers.

“We want to help keep everyone from falling victim to any malicious fraud schemes regarding utilities,” said Jeff Martin, Evergy vice president, customer operations. “Evergy is joining this effort so our customers are informed about the signs of a scam and can avoid any malicious utility schemes.”

Evergy offers these safety tips for customers:

- Verify the person you’re engaging is with Evergy by asking to see company identification or by calling the [Customer Contact Center](#) before giving credit card, debit card, Social Security, ATM, checking or savings account numbers to anyone who comes to your home, calls, text and/or sends an email requesting this information about your utility bill. If you can’t verify that you’re speaking with an Evergy employee, do not give them this information.
- Be suspicious if you receive an email or text message regarding your utility bill if you have not requested online communications from Evergy.
- For customers using Evergy’s online bill pay system, always make online payments directly through [evergy.com](#).
- Never provide personal information via email or click any suspicious links.

Signs of a potential scam include:

- **Threat to disconnect:** Scammers may aggressively tell the customer their utility bill is past due, and service will be disconnected – usually within an hour – if a payment is not made.
- **Request for immediate payment:** Scammers may instruct the customer to buy a prepaid card – widely available at retail stores – then call them back supposedly to make a bill payment.
- **Request for prepaid card:** When the customer calls back, the caller asks the customer for the prepaid card’s number, which grants the scammer instant access to the card’s funds, and the victim’s money is gone.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, scammers have increased calls, texts, emails, and in-person tactics and are contacting utility customers asking for immediate payment to avoid service disconnection. As a reminder, Evergy 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.

The phone scammer is often a live person posing as an Evergy employee who notifies the customer of a past due bill and demands immediate payment to avoid service disconnection. Scammers also can manipulate the caller ID to look like the company phone number. In some instances, the caller requests that the customer purchase a money gram to pay their bill.

If the customer is unable to make an immediate payment or does not answer, the caller gives out a return phone number unassociated with Evergy or the utility for customers to call back. When calling, customers are often prompted by a convincing, but fraudulent recording with instructions to make their payment with a live person. This phone number is not associated with Evergy.

Due to valued customer reports, Evergy has worked in conjunction with UUAS to quickly shutdown many of these fraudulent numbers and derail scams. In such cases, it is extremely valuable for the reporting customer to obtain and provide the scammer’s requested callback number.

UUAS is dedicated to combating utility scams by providing a forum for utilities and trade associations to share data and best practices, in addition to working together to implement initiatives to inform and protect customers.

If you have questions about the legitimacy of a bill, phone call or email regarding a utility bill, do not provide your personal or banking information to anyone. Contact the Evergy Customer Contact Center at the number located on your bill or at [evergy.com](#).

If you feel you have been a victim of a scam, please work with your local law enforcement agency to report the crime. For more information, visit [Evergy Utility Scams](#). Evergy will share more tips about protecting yourself against scammers on our social media accounts ([Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)) as well this week.

Evergy, Inc. (NYSE: EVRG) serves approximately 1.6 million customers in Kansas and Missouri. We were formed in 2018 when long-term local energy providers KCP&L and Westar Energy merged. We generate nearly half the power we provide to homes and businesses with emission-free sources. We support our local communities where we live and work, and strive to meet the needs of customers through energy savings and innovative solutions.

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