

OPPD warns customers of scam attempts

**(KLZA)-- Omaha Public Power District is receiving an increased number of calls today from our customers, regarding scam phone calls. So far today, we have received about 80 reports of aggressive callers, trying to con customers out of money. And that number is expected to climb.**

**Scammers have been targeting utility customers across the country for years, now. They pick up several times a year. Sometimes, these calls spike around holidays or after highly-publicized weather or outage events. Callers may be trying to capitalize while customers are feeling vulnerable.**

**Often, the scammers use “spoofing” technology so that caller identification appears to show a legitimate OPPD phone number. Callers pretend to be OPPD employees, demanding payment from customers on bills they claim are overdue. In some cases, they claim customers need to pay for equipment, such as meters.**

**Callers tell customers their service will be disconnected if they don’t pay up. They try to get their targets to give up credit, debit or checking account information over the phone to make a payment, or to purchase a pre-paid debit card, such as a Green Dot card, from a nearby store. They instruct customers to call them back with the card numbers.**

**We’ve also heard of scammers trying to convince customers they overpaid on their utility bill. They ask the customer to provide bank account information in order to receive a credit. They have also been known to use phony apps or QR codes to steal customers’ money.**

**OPPD stresses that none of these people demanding payments or financial information work for the utility. The utility never cold calls customers demanding payment. And it does not accept payment in the form of pre-paid debit cards.**

**OPPD advises customers:**

- **Never give personal or financial information to a stranger during an unsolicited phone call.**
- **If such a person should appear unannounced at one’s door, claiming to work for the utility, do not allow them inside. Always ask for identification or verification. OPPD employees always carry identification. Failure to produce identification is a tip-off to the customer that something is wrong.**
- **Be suspicious of any emails you receive regarding your utility bill if you**

**have not opted in to online communications from OPPD.**

- **Never provide personal information via email, and do not click on suspicious links.**
- **Do not respond to text messages seeking personal information or utility bill payments. Do not click on links within such messages.**
- **Never turn off security systems for any reason if a stranger asks. Any customer who receives such a request should call law enforcement immediately.**

**Customers with questions about making a payment, or about their account in general, should always call OPPD directly. Within Omaha, the number is 402-536-4131. Outside of Omaha, customers should call 1-877-536-4131.**

Many Signals Communications