



# Public Service Commission of West Virginia

Contact: Susan Small, 304-340-0820, [ssmall@psc.state.wv.us](mailto:ssmall@psc.state.wv.us)



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## PSC Warns of Utility Billing Scam

The Public Service Commission is again warning about scam phone calls in West Virginia from people claiming to represent electric and gas utility companies. A gentleman from the Parkersburg area contacted the Public Service Commission to report he had been bilked out of \$1500.00 last month by a caller claiming to represent Appalachian Power Company.

The callers, often targeting businesses and the elderly, threaten to shut off utility service unless a delinquent bill is paid within a matter of hours. The callers instruct customers to go to Wal-Mart or another store and buy a Green Dot Visa or similar pre-paid debit card, load money onto the card and pay the delinquent bill over the phone.

Scammers reportedly have created a sense of legitimacy by making the name and phone number of the power company appear on the victims' caller ID.

The Public Service Commission is reminding West Virginians to be vigilant, use common sense if contacted about utility payments and keep the following in mind:

- Utility company representatives calling about a delinquent bill would not specify a method of payment.
- Never give out personal or financial information to someone who has called you.
- If you are unsure about the caller, hang up and call the utility company back using the phone number on your bill.
- Anyone who receives a billing call should try to verify the identity of the caller and report to police calls that seem similar to the scam.

For information on authorized payment locations, contact your utility company.

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