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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BGE and the Maryland Public Service Commission Join Together to Warn Customers of Scams During the Holiday Season

BALTIMORE, MD (Nov. 16, 2020) – With the holiday season quickly approaching, [BGE](#) is recognizing Utility Scam Awareness Day, Nov. 18, by reminding customers to be on the lookout for imposters using energy-related scams to steal money and personal information.

While scams occur throughout the year, the company sees an increase in scam reports during the holiday season. Additionally, imposters are taking advantage of the economic challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and pressuring families and businesses who may be struggling with past-due balances.

This year, BGE is partnering with the Maryland Public Service Commission to help educate Marylanders about the need to stay vigilant against scammers during these challenging times. So far in 2020, BGE customers have reported losing close to \$170,000 to scammers and imposters.

"Utilities United Against Scams Day continues to be very important opportunity for BGE to reach out to our customers," said Tamla Olivier, chief customer officer and senior vice president of customer operations for BGE. "Unfortunately, scammers are constantly changing their tactics and it's extremely important that our customers have the most up to date information on these scams in order to help them avoid becoming victims."

"Scam artists are using the threat of electric or gas service termination to trick customers into giving them money over the phone," said Jason Stanek, Chairman of the Maryland Public Service Commission. "The Commission and BGE are warning customers not to fall for this trap. Utility customers should never provide any credit card number or bank account information over the phone. If you have questions about your account, contact your utility directly with information found on your bill or on the utility's website."

Currently, the most prevalent scam calls are robo-calls where customers are asked to "press 1" to hear about their bill and make a payment. Once the number 1 is pressed, a live person gets on the line and demands immediate payment or personal information.

BGE is also aware of calls where scammers claim, "Your meter needs to be switched out immediately or your power will be turned off." These claims are followed by a demand for immediate payment using Cashapp, Bitcoin, Zelle or Green Dot with some of those calls end with the scammers texting a barcode to the customer for immediate payment. As a reminder, utilities will never send a single notification to a customer within one hour of a service interruption, and they never will ask customers to make payments with pre-paid debit or gift cards, or any form of cryptocurrency.

Here are some tips to help identify scams

1. BGE will never come to a customer's home or business to:
 - Demand a payment.
 - Ask for immediate payment with a prepaid cash card.
 - Ask for their BGE account number or other personal information, such as a driver's license number.
2. BGE will never call a customer to:
 - Ask for their account number.
 - Ask for personal information such as their Social Security number or bank information.
 - Ask them to make a direct payment with a prepaid cash card.
3. To identify an actual BGE employee, remember:
 - All BGE field employees wear clothing with the BGE logo, including shirt and safety vest.
 - BGE employees and contractors visibly display a company ID badge with the BGE logo, employee's name, and photo.

If any customer is unsure whether a visitor or caller is a BGE employee or believes he or she has been a target or victim of a scam, call **1-800-685-0123** immediately. To learn more, visit [bge.com/MyAccount](https://www.bge.com/MyAccount).

Tips for business customers

BGE and the PSC are also seeing an increase in energy-related scam attempts targeting businesses. Offenders impersonate the names of BGE and other trusted organizations in email or other communications. Their intention is to deceive businesses into providing personal and financial information or acting on urgent requests for payment.

To help protect a business from cyber-scams:

- Carefully review emails originating from outside your organization's network.
- Check the name of the sender and business and make sure it matches the name and business in the email address. Look for misspellings or slight alterations.
- Make a call to verify the email was sent from a trusted source. Use a phone number from the business' records or the sender's official website and not the number provided in the email.
- Confirm that everything looks legitimate especially when a request can have major effects for your company, such as transferring large amounts of money.
- Hover over website links before clicking to confirm the legitimacy of the site.

Bill-payment assistance to help customers and avoid scam attempts

BGE understands that COVID-19 continues to create economic hardship for many of our customers and

is offering a number of bill-payment assistance programs, including flexible payment options, financial assistance for past-due balances and usage alerts for current bills. Any customer who is experiencing a hardship or difficulty with their bill should call BGE immediately at **1-800-685-0123** to learn more about our payment plans and programs. For more information, visit bge.com/MyAccount.

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[BGE](#), founded in 1816 as the nation's first gas utility and headquartered in Baltimore, is Maryland's largest natural gas and electric utility. The company's approximately 3,200 employees are committed to safe and reliable energy delivery to more than 1.25 million electric customers and more than 650,000 natural gas customers in central Maryland. In the J.D. Power 2017, 2018, and 2019 Electric Utility Business Customer Satisfaction StudySM BGE was ranked Highest in Customer Satisfaction with Business Electric Service in the East among Large Utilities. In addition, in the J.D. Power 2018 Gas Utility Business Customer Satisfaction StudySM BGE received Best in Customer Satisfaction with Business Natural Gas Service in the East. BGE is a subsidiary of Exelon Corporation (Nasdaq: EXC), the nation's leading competitive energy provider. Connect with BGE on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), [Flickr](#), and engage with the latest BGE stories on bgenow.com.

Baltimore Gas and Electric Company (or "BGE") received the highest score in the East Large segment of the 2019 Electric Utility Business Customer Satisfaction Study and the East Region of the 2018 Gas Utility Business Customer Satisfaction Study of electric and gas utility customer satisfaction among business customers. Visit jdpower.com/awards.