



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Departments

Member Service Option 3
Engineering Option 4
Marketing Option 5
Operations Option 6

After-Hours Outages and Emergencies:
541-536-2165 or 800-752-5935

OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Thursday
7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Closed Fridays and holidays

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OR-23

Energy Scams Unmasked

Consumers with water, gas and electricity connections have long been targets for utility scams. In today's digital world, every swipe and click increases the risk of potential scams.

Scammers are more sophisticated than ever, and they understand our growing reliance on technology. Scammers have adapted their tactics to trick unsuspecting consumers.

Midstate Electric Cooperative wants to help you avoid energy scams, whether a financial loss or leak of your personal information. I want to share some of the latest scams and tips to help you stay safe from even the craftiest scammers.

Recent Utility Scams

Scammers typically disguise themselves as utility employees or representatives to steal consumers' money or personal information. A common trick is to claim a consumer's bill is past due and threaten to disconnect service if payment isn't received immediately.

Scammers approach consumers through a variety of means. However, the digital line of attack is increasingly more common.

For example, new capabilities disguising caller ID or "spoofing" can make the phone number you see on caller ID appear to be from a trusted source. Spoofing makes it easier for scammers to deceive you because it's more difficult to verify the call.

Another scam uses fraudulent websites identical to a utility payment webpage. What's worse, these pages are often promoted on search engines to trick consumers into clicking and making a payment.

Spotting a Scam

There are several red flags you can watch

for to identify an energy scam. Scammers often use high-pressure tactics to create a sense of urgency.

Scammers may ask for unusual payment methods, such as gift cards or cryptocurrency. If someone pushes for an unusual payment method, it's likely a scam.

You've probably noticed many digital scams, such as emails or text messages, include poor grammar, spelling errors and odd email addresses. These are red flags, so when you see these dodgy forms of communication, consider it a potential scam.

What MEC Will (and Won't) Do

MEC employees never demand an instant, immediate payment or threaten to disconnect your service without warnings. We strive to resolve challenging situations and work with our members to avoid disconnects.

We never ask for your Social Security number or banking details over the phone or through email. We offer several secure payment options, including in person, scheduled payments and through SmartHub.

Avoiding Scams

Always be suspicious of an unknown individual claiming to be an MEC employee requesting banking or other personal information.

If you're ever in doubt about a potential energy scam, call us at 541-536-2126 so we can help. By notifying us about attempted scams, you can create the first line of defense. Help us spread the word and prevent others from falling victim.

Jim Anderson
CEO/General Manager

"Trust, but verify." —Ronald Reagan