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## **SCE Warns Customers to Be Aware of Utility Bill Scam this Holiday Season**

ROSEMEAD, Calif., Nov. 26, 2014 — Southern California Edison (SCE) warns customers to stay vigilant this holiday season as imposters, claiming to represent the utility, continue a [telephone scam](#) demanding immediate payment for allegedly past-due electricity bills.

The hustle and bustle of the season makes [customers](#) especially vulnerable as telephone bill scammers increase calls threatening to disconnect electrical service unless immediate payment is made on past-due bills. The caller demands that payment be made through a prepaid card and urges victims to purchase a prepaid debit card, load a specific amount of money on the card and give the card number to the scammer.

Once the impostor collects the card's value, the customer has been defrauded and the money is gone.

Authorities warn that scammers have become more aggressive. Impostors recently resorted to making claims that local police will be called to your home or business if an immediate payment is not received. Others have established bogus telephone lines that state: "Hello. Thank you for calling Southern California Edison Disconnection Department."

Truth is, SCE does not contact the police about customers' bill payments and the utility does not have a "Disconnection Department."

"The best way for customers to protect themselves against utility impostors and this [phone scam](#) is to educate themselves, their employees and their friends about being aware when they receive telephone calls from individuals demanding money for payment," said Kari Gardner, manager, SCE Consumer Affairs.

In recent years, an estimated 13,000 SCE customers have received calls from phone scammers posing as utility employees threatening to disconnect service due to unpaid bills. According to law enforcement officials, the majority of victims are [small business owners and entrepreneurs](#) whose first language is not English.

SCE customers who suspect a fraudulent call should ask for the caller's name, department and business phone number. SCE customers should end the call and report the incident immediately to local police or SCE at 1-800-655-4555.

SCE offers the following additional tips to customers:

- SCE will never call and demand immediate payment with the threat of service disconnection.
- An SCE employee will never ask for money in person.
- SCE does not accept prepaid cards from customers for bill payments.
- SCE does not conduct credit transactions on weekends or holidays.
- Never reveal personal information, including your credit card, ATM or calling card number (or PIN number) to anyone.

- Never use a call-back number provided by an unknown caller to verify billing information. And, SCE does not use extension numbers. Instead, call legitimate SCE telephone numbers printed on your utility bill or access SCE's website ([SCE.com](http://SCE.com)).
- If someone calls and requests you leave your residence at a specific time for a utility-related cause, call the police. This could be a burglary attempt set up by the caller.
- Be suspicious of anyone who arrives at your house without an appointment asking to check an appliance, wiring or suggesting that there may be some other electrical problem inside or outside your residence.
- SCE employees always have their SCE ID badge displayed on their person for customers to see.

For more ways customers can stay safe, visit [www.sce.com/safety](http://www.sce.com/safety)

### **About Southern California Edison**

An Edison International (NYSE:EIX) company, Southern California Edison is the largest electric utility in California, serving a population of more than 14 million via 4.9 million customer accounts in a 50,000-square-mile service area within Central, Coastal and Southern California.

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