

Tips to stay safe

If you receive a phone call from someone threatening to disconnect your power, hang up. If you want to verify account information, you can call SMECO directly.

- Use the phone number printed on your monthly bill; if you use the phone number an unknown caller provides, it could be a fake.
- Only give payment information over the phone if you initiate the contact.
- Do not provide personal, financial, or account information to unauthorized callers.
- Do not provide Green Dot, Western Union, or Moneygram payments to unauthorized callers.
- Never agree to meet a caller at a local store or bank to make a payment—your safety could be at risk.
- If you want to make sure your SMECO payment was processed, check your bank account or credit card statement.

DON'T GET TRICKED!

Payment scams have become more prevalent and SMECO wants to prevent phone scammers from victimizing customers. Protect yourself with tips to stay safe from scams.

Who do scammers target?

Anyone is at risk, but scammers frequently prey on the elderly and people who speak English as a second language.

Scammers target businesses. Businesses usually have higher monthly bills and scammers will claim the business customer owes a higher amount than a residential customer owes. Scammers exploit the lack of communication between employees and business owners.

Common tricks of scammers

Unknown callers who threaten to cut off service within an hour or two are probably running a scam.

Scammers can make SMECO's name appear on a customer's caller ID.

Scammers can trick people by duplicating voice recordings and imitating utility phone systems.

Know SMECO's procedures

Know how much you owe on your bill and when payments are due. Electric utilities follow state regulations and have set schedules for billing and payment.

- SMECO will mail a termination notice if a bill is past due.
- SMECO calls customers who owe a past due balance using an automated phone system with a recorded message; rarely will SMECO employees make personal "collection" phone calls.
- Collection calls are made about 10 days before service is to be terminated. **SMECO does not require payment at the time of the call.**
- SMECO does not make collection calls or terminate service on weekends or holidays.
- If service is going to be terminated, a SMECO collector will knock on the customer's door before turning off service.
- SMECO collectors will accept credit card payments, checks, or money orders, but they do not accept cash, Green Dot, or pre-paid debit cards.

Because SMECO does initiate automated collection calls and customers can choose to make a payment over the phone, some phone calls are legitimate, but you should never provide your account number to unauthorized callers.

Know the ways to pay

SMECO has a number of ways customers can pay their bills that will help prevent scammers from victimizing them.

- Use budget billing to pay the same amount every month.
- Use AutoPay to have payments made automatically with a credit card or checking account.
- Go online and make weekly payments if that helps with your personal budget.

Our goal is to make it easy for customers to do business with SMECO, and we offer a variety of payment methods that are free and convenient.

1-888-440-3311
smeco.coop/stop-scams

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