

News Release

New Year, Same Warning: NSTAR Urges Customers to Beware of Scams

BOSTON (January 9, 2014) – NSTAR is renewing its warning that scams targeting utility customers across the country continue to affect customers right here in Massachusetts. While some scams include impersonators trying to obtain account information and entry into customers' homes, others include scammers falsely telling residents and businesses their utility company will shut off their power unless payment is made immediately.

While the scammers keep changing the scenario they use to pressure customers into making hasty, often large payments to keep the power on, the scheme to get the money remains basically the same. A caller tells the targeted customer the only way to keep the power on is to pay quickly using an untraceable pre-paid debit card (such as the *Green Dot MoneyPak* cards or *Vanilla Reload Network* card) or, in the case of some business customers, by making a Western Union money transfer. Often, once the scammer believes the customer is on the way to purchase the card, they will call multiple times pressing for follow-through with the payment.

"These scams work by scaring customers and catching them off guard, hoping they'll suspend their better judgment and make a payment or provide personal information," said Penni Conner, Senior Vice President and Chief Customer Officer at Northeast Utilities, NSTAR's parent company. "If any of our customers suspect someone is impersonating a representative of NSTAR, whether on the phone or in-person - even if they show identification, please contact us immediately or call the local police."

NSTAR representatives never demand instant payment over the phone and don't require the use of pre-paid debit cards. Customers can verify they are speaking with an NSTAR representative by asking for some basic information about their account. NSTAR customer service representatives will always be able to verify the name on the account, the account address, and the exact past due balance.

NSTAR employees rarely make unsolicited house visits. Some exceptions include accessing utility equipment to ensure the safe and efficient operation of the distribution system, or if there is a reported safety concern. Always decline any door-to-door offer from someone claiming to be an NSTAR employee. NSTAR representatives will never arrive unsolicited asking for electric account information. Customers should never provide the information if someone represents himself in this way. For those considering switching to a third-party electricity supplier, a complete list of licensed competitive suppliers in Massachusetts can be found online at mass.gov. Customers should only provide their NSTAR account information if dealing with licensed suppliers and want to make a switch.

NSTAR has several convenient payment options, including payments plans for customers who are experiencing financial difficulty, and a [list of authorized retailers](#) for those who wish to pay in person. NSTAR urges anyone who has any doubts about a call, a visit or an offer to contact the company directly at 1-800-592-2000.

NSTAR, a Northeast Utilities company (NYSE: NU), transmits and delivers electricity and natural gas to 1.4 million customers in Eastern and Central Massachusetts, including more than one million electric customers in 81 communities and 300,000 gas customers in 51 communities. For more information, please visit our website: www.nstar.com. Friend us on Facebook, facebook.com/NSTARmedia, and follow us on Twitter: [@nstar_news](https://twitter.com/nstar_news).

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