

UTILITY SCAM ALERT!

When the phone rings and the caller threatens to shut off your electric, natural gas or water service in just a few minutes because of an unpaid bill, you pay attention. That's why telephone fraudsters impersonate utility employees — they can rush you into taking action before you have a chance to think about it.

How to Spot the Scam and Protect Yourself

- Never pay over the phone in response to a call, especially when you're threatened with a service disconnection if you don't pay immediately. If you're getting pressured, hang up and call the customer service number on your utility bill — this will ensure you're speaking to a real utility employee.
- Before shutting off your electricity, natural gas or water, the utility will send you one or more disconnection notices in the mail, and give you several bill payment options, typically online, by phone, automatic bank draft, mail or in person.
- Utilities don't accept gift cards and they never require customers to buy pre-paid debit cards, like Green Dot and MoneyPak, to pay their bill. **Instructions to pay by prepaid debit or wire transfer is a red flag.**
- Don't trust caller ID, even if it shows the name of your utility company. Crooks know how to "spoof" caller ID to make it read whatever they want. It's another sneaky part of the scam that fools a lot of people.
- If FPL arrives in person, demand company PHOTO identification and call FPL at: 1 (888) 988-8249 (or the number on your bill) to verify employment status.

For more Crime Prevention Information visit us at: www.pbso.org/crimeprevention



PALM BEACH COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE

RIC L. BRADSHAW, SHERIFF

