



Ameren Illinois Scam Awareness Week 2018 Tip Sheet

- Utility scammers offer fabricated services or threaten to disconnect power in an attempt to defraud both residential and business customers out of money.
- Since Ameren Illinois began tracking utility scam metrics in mid-2014, more than 4,000 customers have reported being contacted by scammers. This has resulted in upwards of \$140,000 paid to scammers. In 2018 alone, there have been 700-plus attempts to date.
- Anyone is susceptible to a utility scam, but both elderly customers and those who may not speak English as a primary language are generally more vulnerable. Additionally, many scammers will try to target small businesses during peak hours, knowing that a service disruption can negatively impact the bottom line.
- The most commonly reported utility scam scenario involves a perpetrator who calls a residential or business customer and threatens to disconnect service if payment is not received immediately.
- It may seem intuitive that that is a utility scam, but discerning real from fake is often difficult. And nowadays, scammers are using even more advanced tactics (e.g. recordings mimicking the Ameren Illinois customer service line) to appear legitimate and sound convincing, leading potential victims to believe the requests are valid.
- There are several red flags that may signal a utility scam. Keep an eye and ear out for the following:
 - Threats to disconnect service without immediate payment. Ameren Illinois will never threaten to disconnect service in this manner. Disconnect notices are only sent in the mail, and Ameren Illinois makes every effort to work with the customer before getting to this point.
 - Unsolicited requests for personal and proprietary information. No one should ever call you unsolicited and request credit card information, your social security number, address or anything pertaining to your utility bill.
 - Non-Ameren Illinois numbers. Utility scammers oftentimes attempt to replicate the area code, but the legitimate Ameren Illinois numbers are 1-800-755-5000 and 1-800-232-2477.
 - Constant intimidation and pressure to make a payment. If the request is legitimate, the Ameren team member can always wait. Nobody should ever coerce you into payment.
 - Requests to pay with Green Dot Cards, MoneyPaks or other prepaid credit cards. These are attractive options for scammers, as it only takes a bit of information from the back of the card to irreversibly drain funds. However, Ameren Illinois will **NEVER** request payment in this manner.
- Although not as common, Ameren Illinois has also seen instances of door-to-door utility scams. These scammers aren't necessarily threatening power disconnection, but instead, pedaling fake deals or promotions in exchange for personal or account information.
- If anyone claiming to be with Ameren Illinois shows up at your property (in the absence of a previously scheduled appointment), ask to see their badge. Simply wearing Ameren Illinois-branded clothing is not enough.
- If you are contacted by a utility scammer (or are even suspicious), end the conversation immediately and contact Ameren Illinois at 1-800-755-5000. The Ameren Illinois customer care team will listen closely to your account of the situation and provide a report to Ameren Security to determine if additional investigation is needed. You can also put in a call to your local law enforcement.