



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Riverside Public Utilities Warns Customers About ‘Pay Immediately’ or have Utilities Shut off Phone Payment Scam

Riverside, Calif. – Riverside Public Utilities (RPU) is once again warning all of its water and electric customers about a telephone payment scam which threatens to shut down utility services immediately, unless a payment is made.

“All commercial and residential water and/or electric customers of Riverside Public Utilities must know that we would never call them and ask for personal payment information, nor request payment in person at a customer’s home or business,” said RPU General Manager Girish Balachandran.

Customers of RPU are only contacted via paper billing statements, online billing emails, through late payment reminder mailings, or green 48-hour Notice notification tags placed at utility property sites only, and any RPU personnel out in the community drive clearly marked city vehicles, wear city uniforms, and display proper photo identification.

Any late payment contact by Riverside Public Utilities would only come from its Credit and Collections Department.

Unfortunately, scams like this have been going on nationwide for several years. Some feature live callers, others automated messages, that threaten to shut down utility services unless an immediate payment is made by providing personal banking info, credit card info, or a PayPal account (or similar).

Additional utility bill payment scams that have affected RPU customers include: requests by customers to pay for meter change outs to avoid high bills; and the use of telephone number scramblers, which can trick caller identification software to make it look like the calls are coming from the utility, but falsely represent RPU’s customer service telephone number of (951) 782-0330.

While the number is RPU’s main phone for customer accounts and billing questions, for security reasons it will never appear on a customer’s caller ID.

Customers who have any questions about suspicious calls demanding payments are encouraged to hang up with callers, and report them by calling the city’s call center by dialing 311, or (951) 826-5311.

Established in 1895, Riverside Public Utilities is a consumer-owned water and electric utility governed by a board of nine community volunteers that provides high quality, reliable services to over 107,000 metered electric customers and up to 65,000 metered water customers throughout the City of Riverside. The Utility is committed to increased use of renewable energy resources and sustainable living practices that help reduce environmental impacts within the City of Riverside and the state of California.

www.RiversidePublicUtilities.com

www.GreenRiverside.com

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