

OPC Reminds Consumers to Be on Guard Against Energy Product Sales Reps Who Wrongfully Claim to be from Pepco, but Are Believed to be Perpetrating Scams

The Office of the People's Counsel recently has received increased reports about apparent utility scams targeting seniors, low- and moderate-income, and limited English-speaking District residents, particularly Pepco customers. For example, one senior citizen tells OPC that a caller impersonating a Pepco representative demanded immediate payment of their electric bill to avoid having their service disconnected. OPC has been in touch with Pepco about these reports.

Consumers say these scams come in different forms, including salespersons masquerading as utility workers while attempting to gain entry to homes, robotic phone calls offering consumers reduced utility rates, and offers of "coupons or special energy rates" for seniors.

No matter what the pitch, never give your utility account information, Social Security Number, other personal information, or payment to someone in person or over the phone before verifying that you are speaking directly to a utility company representative.

Third Party Suppliers (TPS) authorized by the Public Service Commission may sell energy services to District customers. However, a TPS company representative can and should provide you with proof of who they are.

OPC Shares These Tips:

- Always request identification from a utility company worker knocking on your door, no matter what the utility.
- Beware of anyone who says they are "from the electric or gas company."
- Unless there is a public safety emergency, utility companies rarely visit your home or randomly stop you on the street.
- Request to see any rate offers in writing and do not sign any documents or "limited time" payment plans you have not had time to review.

If you have already been contacted and have concerns or questions about utility services, rates, contract offers, or utility construction in your neighborhood, contact OPC at (202) 727-3071 to talk with a Consumer Outreach Specialist.