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Always Scan for Scams

As technologies evolve and expand, so do criminals

IN TODAY'S TECH-DRIVEN world, scams seem to be around every corner. Criminals will try just about anything—from purporting legal action involving the IRS to turning off power to your home—to separate you from your money.

Karnes Electric Cooperative wants to make you aware of the current wave of utility scams, which often involve an individual posing as an employee of your cooperative. The scammer may use threatening language to frighten you into offering your credit card or bank account information.

Don't fall victim to utility scams. Understand the threats and know what to do.

If someone calls you demanding that you pay your electric bill immediately, hang up. Scammers often use threats and urgency to pressure you into giving



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them your bank information or loading a prepaid credit or debit card. Your electric cooperative will never ask you to offer up personal finance information over the phone. If you have any doubts about the status of your electric bill, contact Karnes EC at 1-888-807-3952.

If someone comes to your home claiming to be an employee of Karnes EC who needs to collect money or inspect parts of your property, call us to verify that they are, in fact, an employee before letting them into your home.

If they aren't, call 911 and do not allow the individual access to your home. It's not uncommon for a scammer to steal things from your home while you're distracted with the phone.

Look out for these other types of scams.

Government agencies like the IRS will never call to inform you that you have unpaid taxes or other liens against you. You will always receive this type of information in the mail. If someone calls claiming to be the IRS, hang up.

If you receive an email from an unknown sender, an email riddled with spelling errors and typos, or an email threatening action unless a sum of money is paid, do not click any links provided within the email and don't respond to the email. Sometimes these phishing emails will look legit—like they're from a company or someone you know. But if it seems fishy, delete the email and move on. One wrong click could give a scammer access to all the information on your computer, including your private financial data.

If someone calls you and claims your grandchild is in jail and needs bail money, the best option is to hang up. If you have concerns that this could be true, ask the caller for the name of the facility reportedly holding them, then hang up. Look up the facility yourself and call that number or check the website. This is a common scam that plays to the heartstrings of grandparents.

If someone calls claiming to have discovered a virus on your computer, hang up. This caller's intent is to gain access to personal information on your computer.

It's unfortunate that such constant suspicion is necessary, but it's important to be vigilant. Scammers are determined, creative and always working on their next ploy.

If you ever have any concerns about someone claiming to be with Karnes EC, please call us directly. We want to make sure you avoid any and all types of scams that could put you or your financial information in jeopardy. ■