



Mount Pleasant Police Department

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*Texas Police Chief Association
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Wayne Isbell, Police Chief

Press Release

Utility Phone Call Scam Hits Mount Pleasant

The Mount Pleasant Police Department is warning consumers against a utility shutoff scam affecting consumers in Mount Pleasant. Several residential customers for electricity have received phone calls where the caller says that their electricity will soon be shutoff if a payment is not made within a certain amount of time. The caller claims to represent a local utility company and aggressively demands payment requesting a credit card number.

As of Thursday we have received three Fraud reports involving this scam occurring in Mount Pleasant, said Chief Wayne Isbell. This trend of prying on victims during the heat of summer has spread across all 50 States. Both the Better Business Bureau and the Texas Attorney General's Office have recently sent out press releases attempting to get the word out, said Chief Isbell. In a recent press release by another agency outside of Mount Pleasant, the scam artist was reported saying "We're shutting off the power in 30 minutes unless you make this payment. Go ahead and call the police; your power is still going to be shut off if you don't immediately make the payment."

Utility company scams are unfortunately too common, said Chief Isbell. These phone calls are random with no clear pattern except for a regional area. All consumers should be aware of this type of phone fraud. If you are behind on a payment you would already be aware of the situation by receiving a notice in the mail. If you do get a phone call with a demand of utility payment, all consumers are requested to take down as much information from the caller as possible, and then call your utility company back from a phone number obtained from your monthly bill. This simple step will immediately clear up any late payment billing inquiries.

Some BBB Tips:

- Confirm that you are speaking to a utility representative. If you have any concerns, tell the caller that you will independently check the phone number for the utility to verify the caller's identity and information
- Be wary of anyone demanding immediate payment or payment in forms that are difficult to trace, such as Western Union, MoneyGram or GreenDot MoneyPak cash cards
- Never give your credit card, debit card, Social Security, ATM, checking or savings account numbers to anyone who comes to your home, calls or sends an email requesting information

- Never allow anyone claiming to be a utility service person into your home unless you have scheduled an appointment and the person has proper identification. Contact police if you become concerned about your safety
- If you believe you may be the victim of a utility scam, you may contact your utility company and report the scam to the Better Business Bureau by calling the **BBB Hotline** located in Longview: (903) 581-8373