

## News Release

Contact: Lew Middleton  
Office: 317.838.1505 | 24-Hour: 800.559.3853

Date: May 20, 2019

### **Duke Energy cautions customers in Indiana to guard against utility scammers**

PLAINFIELD, Ind. – Duke Energy is warning its customers in Indiana to be on guard against phone calls from utility scammers who are demanding that customers pay their electric bill immediately or risk having their electric service disconnected within the hour.

Local law enforcement officials say the number of scam calls reported by citizens has increased in the past few days.

“These scammers are thieves who prey on unsuspecting customers with the sole purpose of stealing their money,” said Marvin Blade, Indiana vice president of community relations for Duke Energy. “The scammers typically target elderly residents or small family-owned businesses, including restaurants, repair shops or other retail businesses.”

The best way to defend yourself against these scammers is to recognize how the scam works and understand that Duke Energy never asks customers for prepaid debit cards.

Typically, the customer receives an unsolicited phone call from an individual who falsely claims to be a Duke Energy representative demanding immediate payment, usually in the form of a prepaid debit card. Scammers have even duplicated the Duke Energy upfront Interactive Voice Response system, so when customers call back phone numbers provided by the scammer, it sounds like a legitimate Duke Energy phone number. Some of these criminals also use caller-ID spoofing to replicate Duke Energy’s customer service number.

#### **Red flags for scam activity**

- The caller becomes angry and tells the customer his or her account is past due and service will be disconnected if a large payment isn’t made – usually within the hour.
- The caller instructs the customer to purchase a pre-paid debit or credit card – widely available at retail stores – then call him or her back to supposedly make a payment to Duke Energy.

- The scammer asks the customer for the prepaid card's receipt number and PIN number, which grants instant access to the card's funds.
- The customer has received no other notice from Duke Energy that an account is overdue.

### **How to protect yourself**

- Duke Energy never asks or requires a customer with a delinquent account to purchase a prepaid debit card – or iTunes card -- to avoid disconnection.
- Customers can make payments online, by phone, automatic bank draft, mail or in person at any number of retail outlets.
- Customers with delinquent accounts receive advance disconnection notification with the regular monthly billing – never a single notification one hour before disconnection.
- Customers who suspect or experience fraud, or feel threatened during contact with one of these thieves, should contact local law enforcement authorities and then the Duke Energy Indiana phone number listed on their bill (800.521.2232). Never dial the phone number the scammers provide.

Customers can get more scam and fraud prevention information at our [“Report Fraud and Scams”](#) web page.

### **Duke Energy Indiana**

Duke Energy Indiana, a subsidiary of Duke Energy, provides about 6,600 megawatts of owned electric capacity to approximately 840,000 customers in a 23,000-square-mile service area, making it Indiana's largest electric supplier.

Duke Energy (NYSE: DUK), a Fortune 150 company headquartered in Charlotte, N.C., is one of the largest energy holding companies in the U.S. It employs 30,000 people and has an electric generating capacity of 51,000 megawatts through its regulated utilities, and 3,000 megawatts through its nonregulated Duke Energy Renewables unit. Duke Energy is transforming its customers' experience, modernizing the energy grid, generating cleaner energy and expanding natural gas infrastructure to create a smarter energy future for the people and communities it serves. The Electric Utilities and Infrastructure unit's regulated utilities serve approximately 7.7 million retail electric

customers in six states – North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Indiana, Ohio and Kentucky. The Gas Utilities and Infrastructure unit distributes natural gas to more than 1.6 million customers in five states – North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Ohio and Kentucky. The Duke Energy Renewables unit operates wind and solar generation facilities across the U.S., as well as energy storage and microgrid projects.

Duke Energy was named to Fortune’s 2019 “World’s Most Admired Companies” list, and Forbes’ 2019 “America’s Best Employers” list. More information about the company is available at [duke-energy.com](http://duke-energy.com). The [Duke Energy News Center](#) contains news releases, fact sheets, photos, videos and other materials. Duke Energy’s [illumination](#) features stories about people, innovations, community topics and environmental issues. Follow Duke Energy on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).

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