



600 South Fourth Street
P.O. Box 383
Stoughton, WI 53589-0383

Serving Electric, Water & Wastewater Since 1886

News Release

Stoughton Utilities

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Robert Kardasz, Stoughton Utilities Director

Utility scams target Stoughton businesses

Stoughton Utilities warns customers to be wary of callers or visitors who claim to be from the utility requesting immediate payment for a delinquent utility bill.

Several businesses in Stoughton were recently targeted with a common utility scam. A caller contacted the businesses in the evening and claimed to be from Stoughton Utilities, telling the employee that answered the phone that their power bill was unpaid. The caller threatened that the electricity would be disconnected in a short period of time unless the businesses made an immediate payment. The businesses were instructed to make the payment using a Moneygram transfer purchased at Walmart.

At least four restaurants in Stoughton were targeted.

These scams take advantage of business owners by calling them at busy times, and by pressuring and intimidating them. "These scammers prey upon people's fears," said Stoughton Utilities Director Robert Kardasz. "They can also seem legitimate in some ways, such as by programming the Caller ID so that the call appears to originate from the utility, however there will still be many red-flags."

Stoughton Utilities reminds customers:

- The utility will never contact you and demand immediate payment over the phone. Customers will always receive a notice by postal mail at least ten days before any disconnection action is taken. Any phone calls made by utility staff will be at least one day prior to any scheduled disconnection.
- The utility does not ask that customers make payments to purchase or repair electric or water meters.
- The utility will never require payment by prepaid debit card or wire transfer, or any other specific payment method. Customers always have the option to pay using any payment method they choose, including online at www.stoughtonutilities.com.
- The utility will never require or accept a customer payment when visiting your home or business. All cash payments must be made at our office.
- The utility will never request your social security or driver's license number over the phone or while we are at your home or business. When we contact you, we will have all your specific account information, including your name, address, account number, and balance.
- When performing disconnections, utility staff will always travel in a vehicle marked with the black and blue Stoughton Utilities logo on the door.

If you are ever in doubt of a phone call you receive, immediately end the call and contact Stoughton Utilities Customer Service at (608) 873-3379. We will verify whether a legitimate employee made the call. Scammers can manipulate the caller ID to mask their number and make it appear they are calling from the utility, so exercise caution even if the caller ID states it is coming from our phone number.

If anyone claiming to be a Stoughton Utilities employee visits your home or business, request to see his or her utility ID card, which will contain his or her name, photo, and the utility logo. If they appear and demand a payment, immediately close the door and contact the police. If you are ever in doubt about a technician's visit, contact SU Customer Service at (608) 873-3379 to verify the employee's identity and the cause for their visit.

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Founded in 1886, Stoughton Utilities serves electric customers in Stoughton and the surrounding area; and wastewater and water customers in Stoughton.