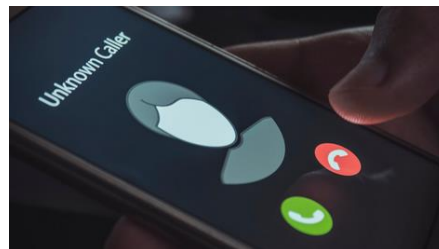


# Don't Fall Victim to Utility Scams

Every day, millions of Americans are targeted by scammers through phone calls, emails, text messages, online or in person. Scammers' tactics can change daily, which is why it's important for consumers to stay on top of the latest scam reports from local and national news outlets, as well as your local utility companies.

Ark Valley Electric Cooperative members continue to be targeted through a phone scam in which the scammers demand immediate payment and threaten to shut off power if the money is not received.



We want you to be aware of two trending scam tactics. One is the overpayment trick, which occurs when a scammer contacts you and claims that you have overpaid your utility bill. The scammer will say they need your personal banking information to deposit the credit back to your checking account. Don't fall for this scam! If you make an overpayment on your energy bill, Ark Valley Electric Cooperative will automatically apply the credit to your account, which will carry over to your next billing cycle.

Another trending scam is spoofing. This is when a caller deliberately falsifies the information transmitted to your caller ID display to disguise their identity. Scammers often use neighbor spoofing so it appears that an incoming call is coming from a local number, or spoof a number from a company or a government agency that you may already know and trust. If you answer, they use scam scripts to try to steal your money or valuable personal information, which can be used in fraudulent activity.

These are just a couple examples of trending scams, so it's important to watch for any red flags.

Here are a few reminders on how to take control of the situation when you've been targeted by a scammer:

- **Take your time.** Utility scammers try to create a sense of urgency so that you'll act fast and hand over personal information, especially over the phone. Take a moment to think about the situation before acting.
- **Be suspicious.** Scammers typically request immediate payments through prepaid debit cards or third-party apps. Unusual requests like this should raise red flags. Remember, if the request seems strange and out of the ordinary, you're likely being targeted by a scammer.
- **Confirm before you act.** If you're contacted by someone claiming to represent Ark Valley Electric Cooperative or another utility but you're unsure, just hang up the phone and call the utility directly. You can reach us at 620-662-6661 to verify the situation.

Our increasingly connected world provides scammers with more opportunities to connect with unsuspecting consumers. Be vigilant, and please report any utility scams to Ark Valley Electric Cooperative so we can let others in our community know. Together, we can help prevent our friends and neighbors from being victimized.