

MEDIA ADVISORY

Minnesota Power warns customers to be aware of increased scam activity

Reports of a telephone scam targeting Minnesota Power customers have increased significantly in the past week, and company officials again caution customers to protect themselves.

Here's how this telephone scam generally works: A caller poses as someone from Minnesota Power and instructs the home or business owner to make an immediate wire or cash payment or their power will be disconnected that same day. Various directions are given for payment—prepaid debit cards from Walgreen's or CVS, electronic funds transfer, routing and check numbers from bank accounts or credit/debit card numbers.

In some instances, the scammer manipulates caller ID to display a fake number, which may actually show as a Minnesota Power number. This is called "spoofing."

Customers who think they are dealing with a suspicious call are **advised to hang up immediately and call Minnesota Power directly at 800-228-4966 to verify account status and to report this illegal activity.**

Minnesota Power doesn't want you to fall victim to this scam. As a reminder, these are the normal procedures we follow for accounts with overdue bills:

1. If a customer is behind on their bill, Minnesota Power sends a written notice before service is disconnected. Customers who have not received a disconnect notice in the mail should not engage anyone on the phone offering to take payment. Instead, customers should hang up and contact Minnesota Power at **800-228-4966** to verify account status and report the attempted scam.
2. We do place courtesy calls for various business reasons and leave our 800-228-4966 number for a return call. These are usually recorded calls and never demand immediate payment of an overdue bill.
3. While you may pay your Minnesota Power bill by phone or credit card, it is only through our third-party vendor, Western Union Speedpay, that these payments are accepted.
4. Never give your personal information to strangers. If a call sounds suspicious, call Minnesota Power at **800-228-4966** to report your concerns to one of our customer representatives.
5. To further protect yourself, use only authorized methods to pay your Minnesota Power bill.

Minnesota Power provides retail electric service within a 26,000-square-mile area in northeastern Minnesota to 143,000 customers and wholesale electric service to 16 municipalities. More information can be found at <http://www.mnpower.com/CustomerService/PaymentOptions>.

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